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## 832,000 Acres: Maine's 1825 Fire and Its Piscataquis Logging Aftermath, Chapter 4

Bill Geller

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## **832,000 acres - Maine's 1825 Fire & Its Piscataquis Logging Aftermath**

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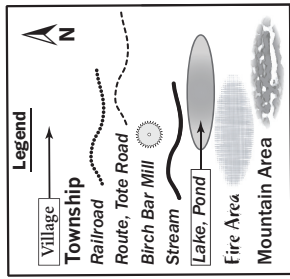
December 2019

William (Bill) W. Geller – researcher and writer

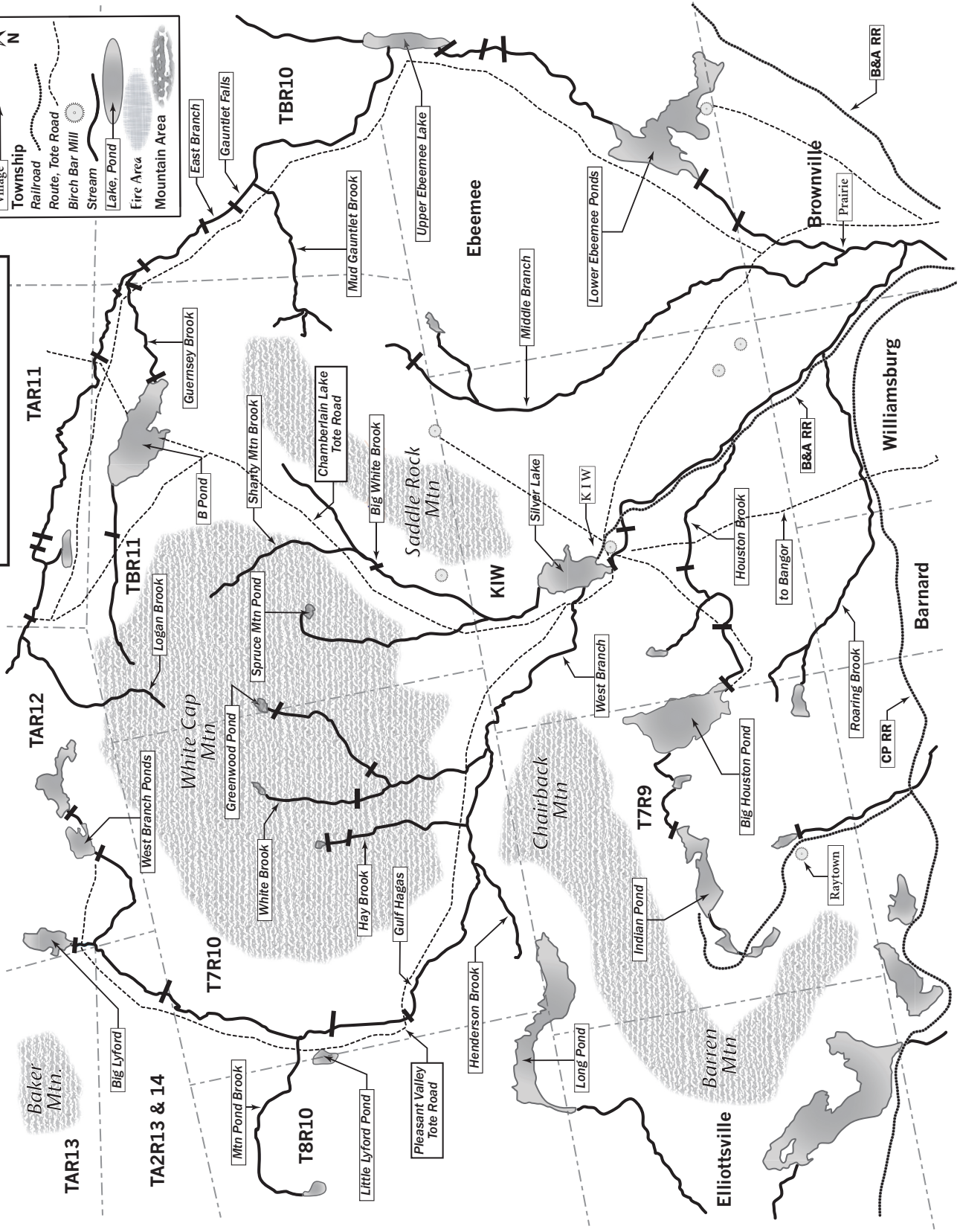
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**Pleasant River Drainage - North**



## ***Chapter 4: Pleasant River, West Branch Pleasant River, East Branch Pleasant River and their Tributaries***

### **The drainage**

The Pleasant River is the drainage for the northwest quadrant of the greater Piscataquis River watershed that includes nine townships. Its mouth is on the Piscataquis River 17 miles from the Penobscot River. Brownville village formed in 1806 at the first waterpower site 11 miles upriver from the Piscataquis River.

Four miles above Brownville village and just above Brownville Junction the river forks, with the East Branch of the Pleasant River (East Branch) continuing northerly through Ebeemee township (T5R9 N.W.P.). It then shifts northwest, passing north of Saddle Rock (Saddleback), Big Shanty, and White Cap mountains and south of the Boardman mountains to reach its headwaters to the west of Boardman Mountain, 30 miles from Brownville Junction. No communities ever developed on the banks of this branch.

The other fork, the West Branch of the Pleasant River (West Branch), flows from its headwaters on the west side of the height-of-land separating it from the East Branch headwaters. The river drains westerly from the West Branch ponds area under the northwest side of White Cap Mountain and then turns south along White Cap and Gulf Hagas mountains' western side before plunging easterly through Gulf Hagas (the Gulf), between White Cap and Chairback mountains, to reach Silver Lake and the Katahdin Iron Works community (KIW) 9 miles from its junction with the East Branch and 38 miles from the head of Third West Branch Pond. Katahdin Iron Works (KIW) village at the waterpower source at the foot of Silver Lake was the only community that developed on this waterway.

### **Brownville township villages to the Piscataquis River**

Three settlements developed in Brownville township. The river's first settlers arrived at the first falls on the Pleasant River in 1806, and built a sawmill around which the village Brownville formed. Another cluster of farms was 8 miles north of Brownville, where the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road turned northwest at the Brownville township north town line, and the area became known as North Brownville (Prairie). This was an overnight stopping point for teamsters heading north. Brownville Junction, 4 miles north of Brownville village and also on the river, began to develop as a community in 1889, when the east-west running Canadian Pacific Railroad (CPR) crossed the 1882 laid Bangor and Aroostook Railroad (B&A) track headed to Katahdin Iron Works (KIW) village at Silver Lake.

The early Brownville village settlers were summer farmers and winter loggers. The white pines (pines), the only tree loggers cut until about 1850, were abundant along the river in both directions. By 1825 loggers had already cut them on the riverbanks as far as the mouth of Guernsey Brook, which drains B-Pond (Baker Pond), 19.6 miles above Brownville on the East Branch.

The fire of 1825 probably brought to a near standstill logging operations between the Piscataquis River and Brownville village. Some untouched forest islands remained, but only enough to interest, sustain, and meet needs in the local community.

The fire did not deter loggers from continuing to move north. About five years after the fire, Brownville village was the established staging area for logging supplies and men headed to the logging camps to the north in the West Branch of the Penobscot watershed and westerly into the Pleasant River drainage. Teamsters totting supplies came north from Bangor through Brown-



ville village, where the road split. The Nahmakanta Tote Road went northerly, west of Schoodic Lake and east of Upper Jo-Mary Lake, to the southwest corner of South Twin Lake, to serve loggers on the Lower Chain Lakes and those on the West Branch of the Penobscot River between the lakes and Ripogenus Gorge. The other fork was the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road that went to Silver Lake and up Big White Brook valley, where it turned northwest to cut across the headwaters of the East Branch and continued north.

During these early years some log drives ended at the Brownville village mill and others continued down river. The sawyers milled the logs and then created rafts of the dimension lumber, which a crew drove to the Bangor market. The strategy was far more risky than simply driving whole logs, and lumber dealers gradually abandoned it. Other loggers, operating in groups as small as three, rafted their logs down river to the Bangor market.<sup>1</sup>

Some logs for the early mill probably came from the west out of Whetstone Brook into the Pleasant River a mile above the Brownville dam. The 1825 fire engulfed the brook's lower end, but not that part of it that drains the upper portion of Williamsburg township. No record describes any dams or stream improvements. However, by 1858 a sawmill and tannery with a dam were on the brook half-way between the river and the Brownville west town line, but neither were there in 1882.<sup>2</sup> The tannery suggests a supply of hemlock bark was within hauling distance from the unburned portion of Williamsburg township. The first known drive on the stream was for the Judson Briggs sawmill in Brownville village in 1886.<sup>3</sup> The only other recorded drive was that of S.A. Thomas and Son in 1897; they drove 150,000 board feet of pine and spruce into the river and boomed them.<sup>4</sup>

Mill activity in Brownville village increased dramatically when the railroad arrived in 1882 and connected to KIW village at Silver Lake that same year. Judson Briggs, who owned a sizable mill that opened before 1880,<sup>5</sup> realized the railroad would bring new opportunity, and

was awaiting the completion of the line to KIW village.<sup>6</sup> Some of his logs would eventually reach his mill on the rail line and others came in via the river. In 1885 the Briggs mill sawed 7 million board feet of lumber. He and his associates continued to mill lumber through about 1902–1903.<sup>7</sup> With the railroad, sawyers now had a safe means for their product to reach the Bangor market.

The two other Brownville village area river mill sites, which had remained open, soon hosted a mill or two.<sup>8</sup> E. Chase planned to build another dam and mill in Brownville in fall 1883.<sup>9</sup> A year later people of Brownville were speculating about two more dams above the village, one for a pulp mill, and the other for something unknown.<sup>10</sup> By the early 1890s Brownville village had two more substantial mills. The Johnson and Clough mill opened in 1883 on the west side of the bridge at the dam and employed 40 men that produced 10 million matches a day from pine. In 1895 John Lewis and Sons of Truro, Nova Scotia bought the match factory. It burned several times, but they always rebuilt it. Over the years they milled a wide variety of wood products. In 1900–1901 the company also handled birch; whether that was a milling or logging operation is unknown.<sup>11</sup> The Lewis family operated the mill until 1960, when they sold. The Hancock and Bowdoin steam sawmill opened c.1892 and in 1896 it was sawing 2 million board feet of logs.<sup>12</sup> Between 1892 and 1897 their crew logged in the northern part of Brownville township.<sup>13</sup>

In 1906 Fleetwood Pride, with the help of other investors, moved his logging and milling interests to Brownville village, after his large mill in Houlton burned to the ground.<sup>14</sup> During March and April 1907 he built the 54 x 164 feet mill on the site of the P.R. Eames Company, and employed about 50 men who milled up to 60,000 board feet of lumber per day.<sup>15</sup> He bought stumpage rights for

1 Judson Gerrish and Henry Gerrish, *Brownville Centennial Book* (Dover-Foxcroft, ME: F.D. Barrows, 1924)

2 H.F. Walling, *Map of Piscataquis County* (New York: Lee and Marsh, 1858); *Piscataquis County Maine Map* (Houlton & Dover, ME: George Colby, 1882); both available online through the Library of Congress

3 *The Piscataquis Observer*, May 20, 1886

4 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 30 and May 21, 1896

5 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 28, 1881

6 *The Maine Mining Journal*, April 7, 1882, p. 219

7 *The Maine Register, State Year-book, and Legislative Manual*

8 George J. Varney, *Gazetteer of the State of Maine* (Boston: B.B. Russell, 1881)

9 *Mount Desert Herald* (Bar Harbor, ME), September 27, 1883

10 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 10, 1884

11 *The Maine Register, State Year-book, and Legislative Manual*

12 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 30, 1896

13 William R. Sawtell, *Of Brownville and the Junction* (Milo, ME: Milo Printing Company, 1983)

14 The Northeast Folklore Society, Edward D. Ives, editor, *Fleetwood Pride, 1864–1960, The Autobiography of a Maine Woodsman* (Orono, ME: The University of Maine Press, 1967)

15 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 4, 1907

ten years on the East Branch, primarily in Townships A and B of Range 11 W.E.L.S.. The banking panic of 1907 forced Pride to sell his controlling interest in 1908 and he soon left the operation and William Annis apparently ran it. The mill continued to operate, perhaps under Pride's name, through 1912–1913.<sup>16</sup>

Once the Pride mill closed, no substantial lumber mill replaced it until Ernest H. Ladd opened his sawmill about 1932–1933 on the former Pride Company mill site. When he first opened, he drove his pine sawlogs from Upper Ebeemee Lake, but then in later years his crews did some hauling with trucks.<sup>17</sup> Shepard and Morse Lumber Company succeeded Ladd about 1954 and closed the mill in 1958.<sup>18</sup>

Bypassing Brownville village until 1896 were most teamsters hauling ash and birch logs to the Milo village mills because of the presence of the railroad line. When the rail line reached Brownville and KIW villages in 1882, the Milo mills increased output, but no new hardwood mills quickly opened in Brownville. The one Brownville mill using birch,<sup>19</sup> the U.S. Pegwood, Shank and Leatherboard Company, opened in 1896 and operated through at least 1950–1951.<sup>20</sup> Their products, pegwood, shanks, and leatherboard, were items in demand by shoe manufacturers. Pegwood was a part of the hole punching and stitching process, and leather board, a combination of pulp and leather, was for the production of shoe heels.<sup>21</sup>

## East Branch of the Pleasant River

### *River landmarks and distances*

Brownville to:

- mouth of the East Branch – 4.6 miles
- mouth of the Middle Branch of Pleasant River  
– 6.1 miles
- Lower Ebeemee Pond – 7.6 miles
- Across Ebeemee Pond – 9.1 miles
- Rocky Falls – 10.6 miles
- Upper Ebeemee Pond – 12.1 miles

Upper Ebeemee Pond inlet – 13.1 miles

Horace Falls – 13.9 miles

Ledge Falls – 14.9 miles

Ramsdel Flats – 15.6 miles

Pleasant Falls – 16.7 miles

Gauntlet Falls – 18.0 miles

Island Falls – 19.7 miles

Guernsey Brook – 21.9 miles

into B-Pond (Baker Pond)) on Guernsey Stream  
– 24.42 miles

Hutchinson Brook – 25.7 miles

Murphy Stream – 28.6 miles

dam below Logan Brook – 29.5 miles

Big Spring, headwaters area – 32.4 miles (10.4 miles  
from mouth of Guernsey Brook)

The difficulties loggers faced in driving the East Branch of the Pleasant River (East Branch) was evident in the number of dams and side dams, over 20 distributed over about 25 miles of river. Limited water was one of those challenges. The only dam on the drainage that was at the foot of a water reservoir was above the 12-mile mark at B-Pond outlet, 10 miles below the upper end of the river.

The earliest loggers, those who cut before the fire of 1825, were well aware of the water problem, for even their small drives got hung by low water. However, loggers recognized the vast wealth of timber that grew along the river and in the huge bowl about 30 miles up river from Brownville village, and continued cutting.

Over the 25 years following the fire the lure of the unburned forest brought an increased number of both logging crews and board feet of logs cut. Even at normal or better than normal spring freshet, loggers, who had to wait for other drives to pass, often had their logs hung up on the river and could not collect them until the following drive season.

Dam building probably began about 1853, and continued for the next 100 years, with increasing sophistication and frequent removal of troublesome rocks. Some dams flooded out rocky sections, another held back water and forced it into a log sluice, others kept the water in a single channel, one kept water from flowing into another watershed. Today when a traveler wades into the river and looks upstream or downstream, one sees the manicured riverbed.

Even with the dams, drive bosses were always thinking about water and how much they would need for their

16 *The Maine Register, State Year-book, and Legislative Manual*

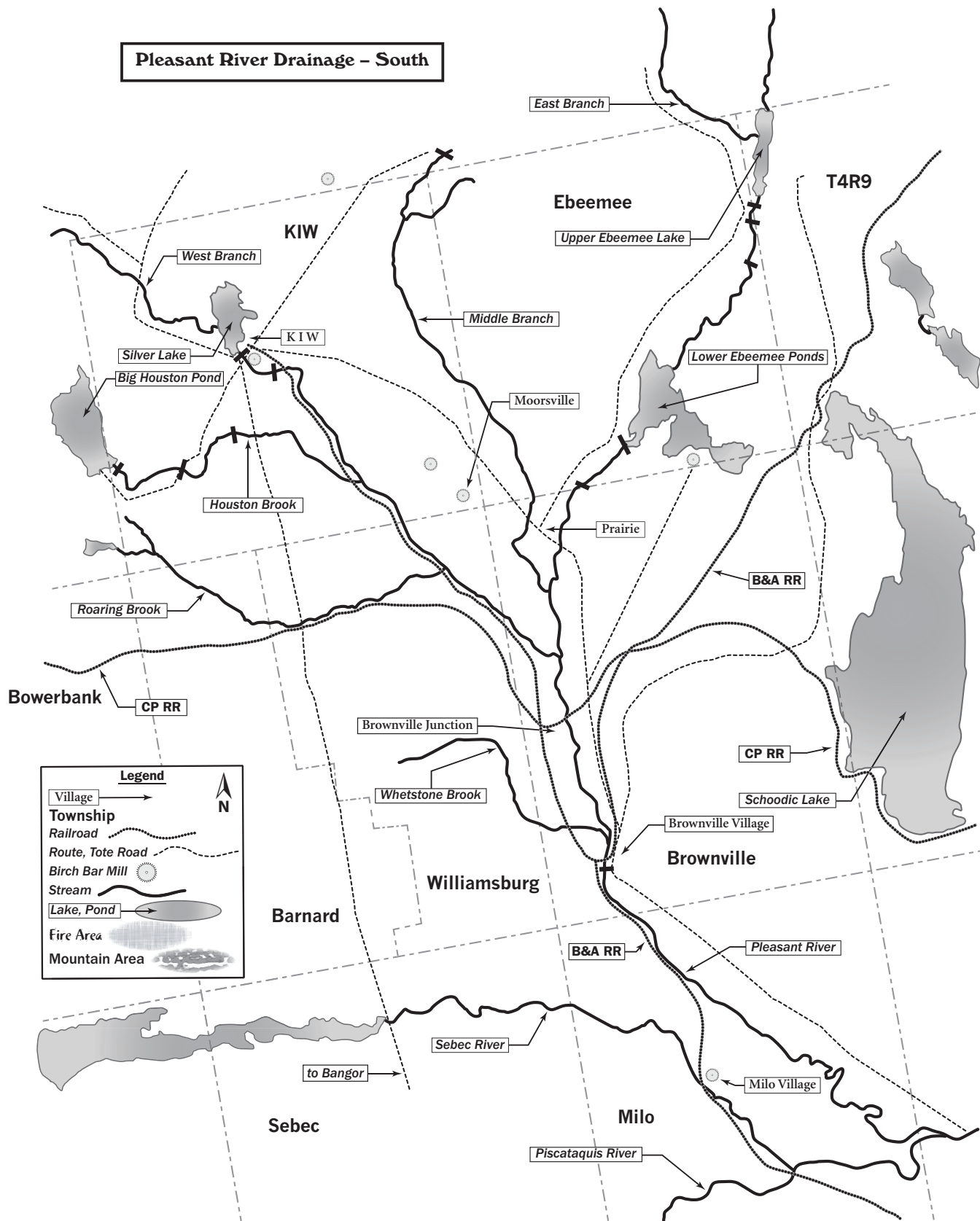
17 William R. Sawtell, *Of Brownville and the Junction* (Milo, ME: Milo Printing Company, 1983)

18 William R. Sawtell, *Of Brownville and the Junction* (Milo, ME: Milo: Printing Company, 1983)

19 *The Industrial Journal*, March 6, 1896

20 *The Maine Register, State Year-book, and Legislative Manual*

21 *The Industrial Journal*, March 1902 (the publication is now monthly). John Lewis of Brownville was the president and treasurer of the Bangor based company in 1902.



drive. At least once a drive boss made a costly error; to increase the head on a dam to enlarge the impoundment. The pressure of the water blew out the dam and left a large number of his logs for the following year.

### Infrastructure

The amount of man-hours that went into the many forms of improvements on this river over many years are staggering.

### Location of some dams moving up river (not including side dams)

- In Brownville township
  - dam Brownville village
  - dam at island 1.5 miles below Lower Ebeemee Lake dam
- In Ebeemee township
  - dams (2) foot of Lower Ebeemee Lake
- In T4R9 N.W.P.
  - dam foot of Upper Ebeemee Lake
- In TBR10 W.E.L.S.
  - Gauntlet #2 dam
  - Gauntlet #1 dam
  - dam below mouth of Guernsey Brook
- In TBR11 W.E.L.S.
  - dam just above the mouth of Guernsey Brook
  - dam on Guernsey Brook just above its mouth
  - dam at outlet B-Pond
  - dam on B-Pond Inlet Brook at foot of bog 1.5 miles up stream
  - dam just below north town line
- In TAR11 W.E.L.S.
  - roll dam (2) below mouth of Murphy Pond outlet brook
  - dam below mouth of Logan Brook
- In TAR12 W.E.L.S.
  - dam at headwaters
  - dam at headwaters to keep water flowing into Roach River system (unconfirmed)<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Some sources list this dam as one of 20 dams at one time or another on the river, but I could not confirm its presence nor, as I look at survey maps, do I detect a logical location for its supposed purpose. A dam is listed if it appears on a map or in a field report. The log drive reports suggest additional dams.

### Calendar of dam charters, river improvement work, and river assessments

**1852:** The Pleasant River Dam Company formed under a charter granted by the Maine state legislature. The charter included improvements and dams on all tributaries. No records of actual river improvements are available. However, about 1860 Charles Cole and Joe Levesque were working a drive and stationed at the dam at the top of Gauntlet Falls, guiding the logs one at a time through the dam sluice into the natural rock sluice. Levesque's pick pole stuck in a log and he got pulled in, as did Cole trying to save him. Both men managed to hang onto the log without getting crushed, but Levesque was unable to grab any of the long poles other drivers extended out over the rapids and went under never to be seen again. Cole made a grab.<sup>23</sup>

**1871:** Lumbermen were building dams on the East Branch in the area of the Ebeemee ponds.<sup>24</sup>

**1872:** The East Branch Pleasant River Dam Company received legislative approval to take over the charter granted in 1852.

**1879:** Lumbermen were again building or rebuilding dams at Upper Ebeemee Lake and other ponds with the intent of not having logs get hung up in dry season.<sup>25</sup>

**1881:** Daniel Lord assessed the river for driving and made recommendations to the dam company for improvements.<sup>26</sup> Whether lumbermen implemented any of the following is undiscovered. His dam recommendations included these locations: outlet of Lower Ebeemee Lake, Upper Ebeemee Lake (6-foot head), and the head of Gauntlet Falls. He suggested wing dams at Rocky Falls, Horace Falls, Ledge Falls, Ramsdel Falls, Pleasant Falls, and seven at Gauntlet Falls. The specific recommendation for the Gauntlet Dam was a 15-foot head with a 10-foot gate, two 7-foot gates, and a 50-foot sluice. Such a dam would provide a mile-long impoundment reaching to Island Falls; it would hold a million board feet of logs and would help prevent jams at Gauntlet Falls.

**1890:** Someone rebuilt the B-Pond dam with a substantially increased head; it included two 8-foot gates.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Benjamin C. Cole, *It All Happened Up In Maine* (Stonington, ME: Penobscot Bay Press, 1980)

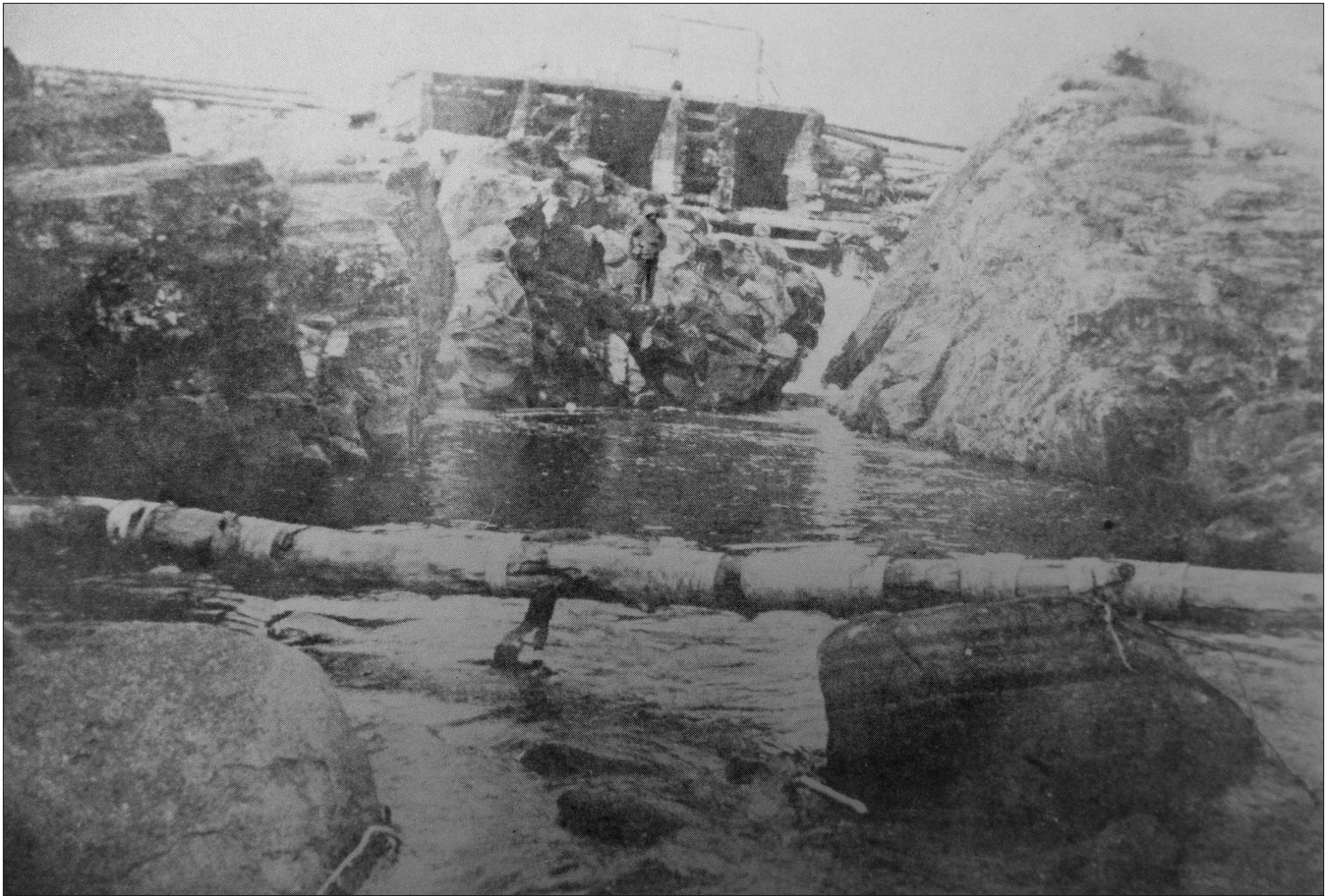
<sup>24</sup> *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, December 12, 1871

<sup>25</sup> *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, April 26, 1897

<sup>26</sup> McCrillis Family Papers, available at University of Maine Raymond Fogler Library Special Collections

<sup>27</sup> Theodore Lincoln Smith, *Some notes on a two-week trip to Katahdin Iron Works and B-Pond, 18 September 1920 to 4 October 1920;*





About 1860 Charles Cole, trying to save Joe Levesque while sluicing logs at the Gauntlet Falls dam, fell in, went through the dam, held onto a log, survived the rock chute, and successfully grabbed a long pole held by another log driver who pulled him to safety. (courtesy of Jeanne Megquier, a great-granddaughter of Charles)

**1891:** Samuel White and John Crane made dam and river improvements between B-Pond and the junction of the East and West Branches of the Pleasant River under an agreement with East Branch of the Pleasant River Dam Company.<sup>28</sup> The work included: building a driving dam at the island below Lower Ebeemee Pond; blasting and taking out rocks below Lower Ebeemee Pond and between Lower Ebeemee Pond and Rocky Falls (1.5 miles); building one wing dam below Rocky Falls, one wing dam at Cowyard Falls and blasting and removing rock in that area; rebuilding the Upper Ebeemee dam with a 7-foot head and three 8-foot gates; building one wing dam seven-tenths of a mile above Upper Ebeemee Lake at Horace Falls and removing two bad rocks in that area; removing one large rock at Rocky Falls; building one driving dam at the head of Pleasant Falls and one

on the lower part of the falls; removing by blasting of about 20 bad rocks between Pleasant Falls and Gauntlet Falls; removing many rocks in the 5 miles between Island Falls and B-Pond; repairing B-Pond dam; and rebuilding a dam with three 7-foot gates on the inlet brook of B-Pond. The estimated cost of this work was 2,500 dollars. The river at Gauntlet falls and a mile above it at Island Falls had previously been improved and was fine.

**1892:** J.B. Hersey of Patten and W.H. Wheeler of Passadumkeag made river improvements both up and down river from the mouth of Guernsey Brook.<sup>29</sup> Their work, costing 2,000 dollars, included building: one 400-foot dam with a 7-foot head and two 7-foot gates; five roll dams of varying lengths (110, 100, 93, 27, and 30 feet); a 240-foot dam with 7-foot head and two 7-foot gates; a 450-foot-long dam with 9-foot head and two 7 foot

available at the University of Maine Folklore Center

<sup>28</sup> McCrillis Family Papers, available at University of Maine Raymond Fogler Library Special Collections

<sup>29</sup> McCrillis Family Papers; available at University of Maine Raymond Fogler Library Special Collections

gates; 48 abutments from 20 to 50 feet long. The recorded information did not include specific locations.

**1894:** Martin Laughlin, a member of the East Branch company, built two roll dams on the river not far below the mouth of B-Ridge Pond (Murphy Pond) outlet stream. They flooded out troublesome jamming areas above each of them. Prior to the building of these dams some lumbermen had their teamsters haul to a landing below the lower of the roll dams. Laughlin also did work on the B-Pond dam.<sup>30</sup>

**1906:** Henry Prentiss received an assessment of the dams on that part of the East Branch that ran through TAR11 W.E.L.S., that section being from below Logan Brook to a mile below Hutchinson Brook. The first dam had extensive rot and needed considerable work in order to be useful. The dam a mile from the first dam had a missing wing and the third dam, the Clifford Dam, was worthless without its west wing dam. The estimate for the repairs was \$4,000. The same assessor calculated that the land in TAR11 W.E.L.S. near the river still had 9 million board feet of good timber.<sup>31</sup> A crew made the repairs and Fleetwood Pride cut the area in each of the next four years.

**1906:** Dams were in place at Upper Ebeemee Lake and Lower Ebeemee Pond in order to support drives to Advance Bag and Paper Company in Howland village.<sup>32</sup>

**1906:** Fleetwood Pride, with the help of other investors, moved his logging and milling interests to the Brownville area.<sup>33</sup> He bought stumpage rights for ten years on the East Branch. Between April and November of 1906, his crew of 100 men, supported by 16 horses, built 12 new dams with gates, repaired two other gated dams, made 40 wing dams and side dams at islands, and built abutments ranging from 40 to 250 feet in length, all between the foot of Upper Ebeemee Lake and his dam at the head of the watershed; it kept water from flowing into the Roach River system of the Kennebec watershed.<sup>34</sup> At the

west side of the dam at the top of Gauntlet Falls his crew also rebuilt the wooden sluice that bypassed the falls and some of the rapids below it.

**1913:** M. Hudson and his associates sought and received from the dam company permission to make improvements on the river. Hudson recouped his costs through charges in tolls charged by the dam company.

**1919:** The B-Pond Dam washed out before the drive started. The Howland Pulp and Paper Company rebuilt it for the 1920 drive season with one 6-foot gate.<sup>35</sup>

**1920:** The four dams in township TBR10 W.E.L.S. were of no value.<sup>36</sup> A crew was rebuilding the B-Pond dam with one 6-foot gate as opposed to the two 8-foot gates of prior years. High water blew out the dam Saturday evening September 25, 1920.<sup>37</sup> When a crew rebuilt it for the 1921 season, it had two gates.

**1927:** Cruisers assessed the B-Pond Inlet Stream ("Guernsey Brook"<sup>38</sup>) dam with a 7-foot head and a 5-foot gate as needing new spiling and gravel.<sup>39</sup> If loggers improved the stream, its lower 2.5 miles was drivable for long logs and 4 miles of it for pulpwood.

**1931:** A report for the four dams on that section of the river in township TBR10 W.E.L.S. indicated that pulpwood drivers needed no intact dams.<sup>40</sup>

**1934:** An assessment of the river in township TAR11 W.E.L.S., the upper end of the river under Boardman Mountain, indicated it had not been driven for some time and driving would require improvements.<sup>41</sup> The improvements might never have been made. Great Northern Paper Company (GNP) heavily cut the area between 1927 and about 1933, but hauled all the logs to Upper Jo-Mary Lake. Farther east on the river, a GNP cut

30 Theodore Lincoln Smith, *Some notes on a two-week trip to Katahdin Iron Works and B-Pond, 18 September 1920 to 4 October 1920*; available at University of Maine Folklore Center

31 The Prentiss Papers, Henry Prentiss log and stumpage book; available at University of Maine Raymond Fogler Library Special Collections

32 William R. Sawtell, *Ebeemee, North Brownville & the Prairie* (Greenville, ME: Moosehead Communications, 2006)

33 William R. Sawtell, *Of Brownville and the Junction* (Milo, ME: Milo Printing Company, 1983)

34 The Northeast Folklore Society, Edward D. Ives, editor, *Fleetwood Pride, 1864–1960, The Autobiography of a Maine Woodsman* (Orono, ME: The University of Maine Press, 1967)

35 Theodore Lincoln Smith, *Some notes on a two-week trip to Katahdin Iron Works and B-Pond, 18 September 1920 to 4 October 1920*; available at University of Maine Folklore Center

36 *Report of Exploration of TB R10 W.E.L.S. 1920*; available at Maine State Archives

37 Theodore Lincoln Smith, *Some notes on a two-week trip to Katahdin Iron Works and B-Pond, 18 September 1920 to 4 October 1920*; available at University of Maine Folklore Center

38 This label "Guernsey Brook" is applied to what is also called B-Pond Inlet Stream that flows into the head of B-Pond.

39 *Report of Exploration of TB R11 W.E.L.S. 1927*; available at Maine State Archives

40 *Report of Exploration of TB R10 W.E.L.S. 1931*; available at Maine State Archives

41 *Report of Exploration of TA R11 W.E.L.S. 1934*; available at Maine State Archives



map for TBR10 W.E.L.S. showed no cutting until after the pulpwood drives on the East Branch ended.<sup>42</sup>

**1940s:** Both long log and pulpwood drives started in B-Pond (TBR11 W.E.L.S.) between 1941 and 1944. These drives suggest that loggers maintained the B-Pond dam and perhaps others down river.

**1950s:** Ladd was still operating his mill at Upper Ebeemee Lake in the early 1950s and presumably drove some pine logs to it, but whether or not his crews maintained any dams is unknown.

### **Log drives**

By the time Brownville village had its first settlers in 1806, loggers were already cutting and driving pine logs. Small crews, like Berry Brown, Nathan Mayhew, and Aaron Johnson, had reached Guernsey Brook, 21.9 miles upriver from Brownville village, in the mid-1820s. The river, with no improvements yet, was rocky, and they were unable to successfully drive their cut in 1827 due to low water. With no dams before 1852, the drives probably remained small so the volume of logs could be moved by water levels typical of spring snow melt and rain.

With the first known dams in place the amount of wood driven increased dramatically. Initially the drives were of under a million board feet of logs. By the end of the 1880s the volume of logs driven per year reached into the millions and in 1885 was 10 million. Crews had increased from a few men to 70 or more spread out in as many as six cutting camps.

Beginning in 1883 lumbermen driving pulpwood joined the long-log drives. They did not mix pulpwood with long logs, but both were on the river during the spring driving season. The pulpwood loggers harvested the poplar that grew in 1825 burn areas south of Gauntlet Falls. The pulp and paper mills fed by the river multiplied substantially by the early 1900s, and their drives dominated as the demand for lumber of the once-booming Bangor mills fell from over 200 to less than 20.

By the turn of the century the saw-log operators were also working in the burn cutting the pine. A great deal of this pine was milled in Brownville village at the Briggs, Pride, and Ladd mills. The last Bangor lumber mill to cut and drive on the East Branch was Jordan Lumber Company from 1915 to 1921.

The pulp and paper companies dominated the cutting activity from the 1920s through the end of the log drives. Advanced Bag and Paper Company in Howland village had the major operations in the 1920s. They gave way to Great Northern Paper Company in the 1930s and their preeminence continued through the last of the pulpwood drives.

The last of the drives on the river were those of long-time logger Gerald Ladd, who died in 1953, as did the river drives. Ladd bought pine stumpage from GNP; their crews did not cut it for pulpwood. These trees had matured after Jordan Lumber Company stopped cutting and driving it in the early 1920s. The Ladd mills were on Upper Ebeemee Lake and in Brownville village with its long history of lumber mills.

### **Log drive organization**

Almost yearly a number of logging operations took place on or near the East Branch, and both saw-logs and pulpwood, unmixed, rode the river current to market. In the early years, perhaps as late as the 1850s, the loggers made rafts of their logs in order to keep them together and so they did not mix with those of other loggers.<sup>43</sup> Some years the lumbermen drove as one unit, but no information suggests that they ever had a formal log-driving association. In other years they drove independently and cooperatively.

Some of the general aspects of the drive are evident. As elsewhere in the Piscataquis watershed, water levels were sometimes low and complicated or compromised drives.<sup>44</sup> The dam just below Logan Brook was perhaps the starting point for logs coming from the uppermost sections of the river. A full head of water here was essential. Some loggers cutting in the upper area hauled to landings below the roll dams below the mouth of Murphy Pond outlet stream. These crews probably used the logging camps on Murphy Pond Stream or on North B-Ridge.

Many drives came into the river from B-Pond, with a drive camp some place between the outlet and the river.

Between the roll dams and the Gauntlet Falls dams, the drive boss probably had a crew at each dam sluicing. How he may have spread them out along the river is unknown. He had a drive camp at Gauntlet Falls, where

<sup>42</sup> a map: Great Northern Paper Company, Woodlands Department, "TWP. B Range 10, June 17, 1954;" available at University of Maine Raymond Fogler Library Special Collections

<sup>43</sup> Chapter two has more detailed information on rafting.

<sup>44</sup> A full discussion of water levels is in chapter two.

men manned the sluice. Behind the Gauntlet dam was space for a million board feet of logs.

The drive boss positioned men at each dam and side dam between Gauntlet Falls and Upper Ebeemee Lake. The next key drive camp was at Upper Ebeemee Lake; one example being the Ryder farm on the river next to the lake.<sup>45</sup> One crew boomed the logs coming from the mouth of the river. Another towed them with a headworks to the outlet. The drive boss may have collected all the logs in boom bags before sluicing them out of the lake.

At Lower Ebeemee Lake, site of another drive camp, probably near the outlet, crews again boomed logs, towed them with headworks, and sluiced them at the dam. Another crew was at the dam below the lake and kept the logs moving. The next camp was at Brownville village, usually in a field outside of town. It appears that Brownville village dam was the other site a drive boss used to collect his drive before moving on to the Piscataquis River. Since there was no stopping the logs once they left the sluice at Brownville village, the drive boss made sure no drive was at or about to pass the mouth of the Pleasant River at the Piscataquis River.

### ***Calendar of recorded log drives and what is known of them: 1872–1953***

**1872:** H.M. Richardson cut over a million board feet of logs at an unknown area, as did E.L. Chase Jr., and both drives went down river to Old Town.<sup>46</sup>

**1878:** Six miles above Brownville village Wilmont M. Peters cut and hauled to the river 1.6 million board feet of pine that his crew drove to an undisclosed mill. His drive got hung up on low water and had to wait for rain, and even then they jammed at the dam and he had to leave them again.<sup>47</sup> Augusta A. Howard's operation with 13 men cut a million board feet of logs on Egery land and drove them 13 miles in 17 days with 12 men. They jammed just below the Brownville village bridge.<sup>48</sup>

**1880:** Quimby's operation was in the headwaters of the river and 250,000 feet of logs got hung at the uppermost dam.<sup>49</sup>

**1881:** The drive got hung up in mid-May.<sup>50</sup>

**1882:** Drummond drove 4 million board feet of logs on the river.<sup>51</sup>

**1883:** Peter's drive included 450,000 board feet of logs and other operators had 2.7 million board feet of logs.<sup>52</sup> Atwell and McLeod logged in the Ebeemee lakes area.<sup>53</sup>

**1884:** The E.L. Chase and Son (Andy) drive of 3.5 million board feet of logs was 10 miles above Brownville with 50 drivers on May 1, 1884.<sup>54</sup> Other loggers that season might have been impacted by severe winds of about November 16, 1883 that started in Shirley township, came down the Piscataquis River, and then up into KIW township and through Ebeemee township before turning northeast.<sup>55</sup>

**1884:** Stratton and Engel had two crews that cut pine and poplar near the Ebeemee lakes. Teamsters hauled it to the lakes and a crew drove it to Brownville village, where a crew loaded the poplar onto rail cars for shipment to Penobscot Chemical and Fibre Company at Great Works. High winds held them up on the lakes.<sup>56</sup> The destination for the pine is unknown.<sup>57</sup>

**1885:** Chase (Zeke) and Cary conducted a drive with 70 men on the Pleasant River, probably originating on the East Branch due north of B-Pond, the B-Ridge area. Their drive of 9 million board feet of logs included those of six other lumbermen: Atwood and McLeod (1.5 million), Hodgden and Thissell (2.4 million), Judson Briggs (1.5 million), T.N. Egery Estate (500,000), Wilkins and Prescott (700,000) and A.J. Chase (300,000).<sup>58</sup> The drivers were sluicing the logs at Brownville village dam on May 22.<sup>59</sup>

**1886:** Parker and Spofford of Bucksport cut in the Wangan Brook area of Long A township and drove 2.6 million board feet of logs.<sup>60</sup> On May 5 T.W. Billings' drive

available at University of Maine Folklore Center

50 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, May 17, 1881

51 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, June 10, 1882

52 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 26, 1883

53 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, November 16, 1883

54 *The Piscataquis Observer*, May 1, 1884

55 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, November 16, 1883

56 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, October 2, 1884

57 *The Industrial Journal*, October 10, 1884

58 *The Piscataquis Observer*, May 21, 1885 and Theodore Lincoln Smith, *Some notes on a two-week trip to Katahdin Iron Works and B-Pond, 18 September 1920 to 4 October 1920*; available at University of Maine Folklore Center

59 *The Industrial Journal*, May 22, 1885

60 *The Piscataquis Observer*, May 20, 1886. An assessor judged the brook drivable for its first 1.5 miles above the pond in 1931. *Report*

45 William Sawtell, *Katahdin Iron Works Revisited* (self-published, 1983)

46 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 25, 1872

47 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 11 and May 9, 1878

48 *The Piscataquis Observer*, May 2, 1878

49 Theodore Lincoln Smith, *Some notes on a two-week trip to Katahdin Iron Works and B-Pond, 18 September 1920 to 4 October 1920*;

of a million board feet of logs, with 600,000 for the Brownville village match factory and the balance for a Stillwater mill, was at Lower Ebeemee Pond.<sup>61</sup> A month later the Grant and Crane drive was in Lower Ebeemee Pond awaiting the rear.<sup>62</sup> C.W. Coffin also drove his cut on the river. Chase drove for Watkins and Prescott. In Williamsburg and Brownville townships Briggs, with 30 horses and 8 oxen and maybe 90 men, drove a cut down Whetstone Brook into the river just above his sawmill in Brownville village.<sup>63</sup>

**The following cuts were at unknown locations on either the East or the West branch:** F.M. Cunningham with 20 horses and about 60 men 30 miles above Brownville village, E.L. Chase with 4 horses and a dozen men, C. Murphy with 20 horses and 60 men, Parker and Bailey with 12 horses and about 36 men, and Samuel White and L.F. Stratton with 10 horses and 30 men each.<sup>64</sup>

**1886 and 1887:** No one logged in that portion of TAR11 W.E.L.S. surrounding the river.<sup>65</sup>

**1888:** Peters was logging at Upper Ebeemee Lake with five or six camps, but whether or not he drove his cut is unknown.<sup>66</sup>

**1889:** Jock Kennedy, working for John Crane and Samuel White, cut south of B-Pond and hauled to it.<sup>67</sup> Also cutting nearby for Crane were Huntington and Morrison.

**1890:** Crane was back in the same general area he logged in 1889.

**1891 and 1892:** Samuel White and John Crane, who rebuilt the dams between B-Pond and the junction of the East and West Branches of the Pleasant River, conducted a drive. In order to recover their investment in infrastructure, they drove from B-Pond area over the next couple of years.<sup>68</sup>

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of *Exploration of TB R10 W.E.L.S. 1931*; available at Maine State Archives

61 *The Piscataquis Observer*, May 20, 1886 and *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, May 5, 1886

62 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, June 5, 1886

63 *The Piscataquis Observer*, May 20, 1886

64 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 7, 1887

65 The Prentiss Papers, Henry Prentiss log and stumpage book; available at University of Maine Raymond Fogler Library Special Collections

66 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, June 5, 1888

67 Theodore Lincoln Smith, *Some notes on a two-week trip to Katahdin Iron Works and B-Pond, 18 September 1920 to 4 October 1920*; available at University of Maine Folklore Center

68 McCrillis Family Papers and Prentiss Papers; both available at University of Maine Raymond Fogler Library Special Collections

**1892:** J.B. Hersey of Patten and W.H. Wheeler of Passadumkeag, who may have been cutting for Crane and Murphy, who also operated elsewhere in the area that year,<sup>69</sup> drove the river from above B-Pond. The Crane and Murphy drive got hung up between Clifford Falls and Gauntlet Falls dam.<sup>70</sup>

**1893:** The John Crane and Con Murphy logging operation was between B-Pond and the East Branch, with their main camp between B-Ridge Pond (currently known as Murphy Pond) and the river.<sup>71</sup> Billy (Willie) Murphy, Con Murphy's son, landed his cut on the river below the Yoke Pond crossing. Thomas Gilbert drove first that year and included the logs hung the previous year.<sup>72</sup>

**1894:** Gilbert drove from B-Pond.<sup>73</sup>

**1894 and 1895:** Billy Murphy logged and drove from the same general area as the previous year.

**1895 and 1896:** Martin Laughlin drove his cut from B-Pond.<sup>74</sup>

**1903:** O.B. Packard and H.W. Weymouth drove 2 million board feet of logs and the Weymouth Brothers drove 1.5 million from below Gauntlet Falls.<sup>75</sup> The cut was in the northwest corner of T4R9 N.W.P..<sup>76</sup>

**1905:** A. Bradeen cut on the south side of the East Branch in TAR11 W.E.L.S..<sup>77</sup>

**1906:** The drive for Advance Bag and Paper Company came down from at least Upper Ebeemee Lake or perhaps farther upriver.<sup>78</sup>

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69 Theodore Lincoln Smith, *Some notes on a two-week trip to Katahdin Iron Works and B-Pond, 18 September 1920 to 4 October 1920*; available at University of Maine Folklore Center

70 Theodore Lincoln Smith, *Some notes on a two-week trip to Katahdin Iron Works and B-Pond, 18 September 1920 to 4 October 1920*; available at University of Maine Folklore Center

71 Theodore Lincoln Smith, *Some notes on a two-week trip to Katahdin Iron Works and B-Pond, 18 September 1920 to 4 October 1920*; available at University of Maine Folklore Center

72 Theodore Lincoln Smith, *Some notes on a two-week trip to Katahdin Iron Works and B-Pond, 18 September 1920 to 4 October 1920*; available at University of Maine Folklore Center

73 Prentiss Papers; available at University of Maine Raymond Fogler Library Special Collections

74 Theodore Lincoln Smith, *Some notes on a two-week trip to Katahdin Iron Works and B-Pond, 18 September 1920 to 4 October 1920*; available at University of Maine Folklore Center.

75 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 2, 1903

76 Stetson family Papers, Stetson Ledger 1902–1914; available at University of Maine Raymond Fogler Library Special Collections

77 The Prentiss Papers, Henry Prentiss log and stumpage book; available at University of Maine Raymond Fogler Library Special Collections

78 William R. Sawtell, *Ebeemee, North Brownville & the Prairie* (Greenville, ME: Moosehead Communications, 2006)

**1907:** Fleetwood Pride's log drive of about 5 million board feet of spruce logs cut by 150 men in five different camps with support of 22 horses was successful.<sup>79</sup> All of his cutting bordered the East Branch in townships A and B Range 11 W.E.L.S.. At least one of the camps was in TAR11 W.E.L.S. some place between Logan Brook and a mile below the mouth of Hutchinson Brook. Pride operations were in this area for the next three years.<sup>80</sup>

**1908:** Pride's logging camps were at B-Pond and Upper Ebeemee Lake.<sup>81</sup> By the start of the drive Pride had lost his controlling interest and was not in charge of the drive of 6 million board feet of logs.<sup>82</sup> The new leadership sent the crew in a month too early, and in trying to force the drive by cutting out ice in B-Pond exhausted their drive supplies. More supplies arrived from KIW, but the ice weakened the dam and the drive got hung up.<sup>83</sup>

**1909:** The Pride operation, again without Pride's guidance, drove a million board feet of logs from the washed out B Pond dam to the Brownville mill.<sup>84</sup> That year's drive boss had his crew extend the head of the dam to 14 feet with top logs and wings, but the dam did not hold and blew before the drive started; the pond was at its normal level within two days.<sup>85</sup>

**1910:** The Pleasant River Lumber Company drove from B-Pond.<sup>86</sup> Fred Strout's drive passed through Brownville village in late April. The Pride company followed with a drive to its mill.<sup>87</sup>

**1913:** Strout was back and driving his cut from the Ebeemee lakes' area.<sup>88</sup>

**1913 and 1914:** Hudson conducted drives of his logs.<sup>89</sup>

**1915 through 1921:** The Jordan Lumber Company drove saw logs from B Pond.<sup>90</sup>

**1920:** The Howland Pulp and Paper Company crew drove the pulpwood from B-Pond.<sup>91</sup>

**1920–1921:** Ladd and Chase cut pine, spruce, fir, cedar, hackmatack, and pulpwood in the western half of T4R9 N.W.P.

**1921 through 1924:** Advance Bag and Paper Company cut pulpwood in the B Pond area and drove it to their Howland village mill.<sup>92</sup>

**1927:** A river assessment deemed the river drivable for pulpwood and long logs.<sup>93</sup> An assessment of the township that surrounds B-Pond indicated that the area had been cut hard; hence, drives from this area had ceased.<sup>94</sup> However, in 1927 loggers cut from two sets of camps well up B-Pond Inlet Brook with about 60 men and 16 horses.<sup>95</sup>

**1927 to the mid-1930s:** GNP loggers cut in the East Branch drainage above its confluence with Guernsey Brook, but hauled it all by horse teams and Lombards to Upper Jo-Mary Lake in the West Branch of the Penobscot River watershed.<sup>96</sup>

**1941–1944:** Ladd cut saw logs, probably pine, in the headwaters of B-Pond on B-Pond Inlet Brook and in T4R9 N.W.P., for his mills at the foot of Upper Ebeemee Lake and Brownville village.<sup>97</sup> He renewed his 1942 two-year mill lease at Upper Ebeemee Lake every two years through 1954, when his family transferred it to Sheppard and Morse Lumber Company.

<sup>79</sup> William R. Sawtell, *Of Brownville and the Junction* (Milo, ME: Milo Printing Company, 1983)

<sup>80</sup> The Prentiss Papers, Henry Prentiss log and stumpage book; available at University of Maine Raymond Fogler Library Special Collections

<sup>81</sup> *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 2, 1908

<sup>82</sup> *The Industrial Journal*, April 1908

<sup>83</sup> The Northeast Folklore Society, Edward D. Ives, editor, *Fleetwood Pride, 1864–1960, The Autobiography of a Maine Woodsman* (Orono, ME: The University of Maine Press, 1967)

<sup>84</sup> *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 22, 1909 and Prentiss Papers; available at University of Maine Raymond Fogler Library Special Collections

<sup>85</sup> Theodore Lincoln Smith, *Some notes on a two-week trip to Katahdin Iron Works and B-Pond, 18 September 1920 to 4 October 1920*; available at University of Maine Folklore Center

<sup>86</sup> Prentiss Papers; available at University of Maine Raymond Fogler Library Special Collections

<sup>87</sup> *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 14 and April 28, 1910

<sup>88</sup> *The Piscataquis Observer*, May 1, 1913

<sup>89</sup> McCrillis Family Papers; available at University of Maine Ray-

mond Fogler Library Special Collections

<sup>90</sup> Prentiss Papers; available at University of Maine Raymond Fogler Library Special Collections

<sup>91</sup> Theodore Lincoln Smith, *Some notes on a two-week trip to Katahdin Iron Works and B-Pond, 18 September 1920 to 4 October 1920*; available at University of Maine Folklore Center

<sup>92</sup> *The Piscataquis Observer*, May 15, 1924

<sup>93</sup> *Report of Exploration of TwpA R12 W.E.L.S. 1927*; available at Maine State Library

<sup>94</sup> *Report Exploration of TBR11 W.E.L.S. 1927*; available at Maine State Library

<sup>95</sup> *Report Exploration of TBR11 W.E.L.S. 1927*; available at Maine State Library

<sup>96</sup> For a description of these logging years, read Bill Geller's, *Within Katahdin's Realm: log drives and sporting camps*, which is online at the University of Maine Raymond Fogler Digital Commons.

<sup>97</sup> George Carlisle, *Timber Map, Township B Range 11, Piscataquis County, ME, 1919*; this map is marked with cuts. The Stetson Family Papers, stumpage reports are available at University of Maine Raymond Fogler Library Special Collections



**1943 and 1944:** An unknown crew cut pulpwood and drove it from B-Pond.

**1946–1948:** A Great Northern Paper Company cut map indicates a logging operation on the west side of the river in TBR10 W.E.L.S. above Upper Ebeemee Lake.<sup>98</sup> Who did the cutting is unknown, as is whether or not the logs went down the river. If this was a pulpwood operation, then the logs probably went down river through Upper Ebeemee Lake to a site near the state road to Millinocket or a B&A siding, where a crew pulled the logs from the river for transportation to South Twin Lake. GNP did not cut pine for pulpwood, and after they finished pulpwood operations, they sold the pine stumpage to loggers like the Ladd family.

**1947–1950:** Ladd had a Stetson contract for pine between Upper Ebeemee Lake and the B&A rail line. He also cut pulpwood for the GNP Millinocket mill. It went into the river and a crew took it out at an unknown location.

**1950s:** Given the amount of cutting of the early 1940s, GNP loggers did not cut again until after the drives stopped on this river. Furthermore, some of the area in the southeast quadrant of TBR10 W.E.L.S. burned in 1950. Logging around the Ebeemee lakes' waters continued into the 1950s.<sup>99</sup> Pulpwood went by truck to South Twin Lake. The Ladd family continued to operate their mill at Upper Ebeemee Lake through 1953; some of the logs piled at different places on the lake's shore were for the mill.<sup>100</sup>

**1960s:** A GNP cut map outlines the cutting operations of the 1960s. The logs of these cuts probably went by truck to the West Branch of the Penobscot River log truck dump at the Route 11 bridge.

### ***The East Branch tributary: Middle Branch of the Pleasant River***<sup>101</sup>

The East Branch of the Pleasant River's major tributary is the Middle Branch of the Pleasant River (Middle Branch) that enters the East Branch about a mile above

its confluence with the West Branch of the Pleasant River. The river flows from Middle Branch Pond at the northwest corner of Ebeemee township and wanders 12 miles in a southerly direction. It drains the eastern half of KIW township and the western portion of Ebeemee township. Loggers cut pine along its drivable lower few miles until the 1825 fire engulfed the whole of the drainage. Loggers first returned for the birch beginning in the late 1870s and then the poplar and pine, which they either drove or hauled to a railroad siding. The presumed last drive any place on the Pleasant River watershed was from the Middle Branch in 1947; a small pulpwood drive by A.A. Price and three helpers.<sup>102</sup>

### ***Birch operations***

The first major cutting operations in the Middle Branch area, between KIW village and the East Branch of the Pleasant River, involved birch. Initially teamsters hauled the birch to Milo village mills. Once the railroad linked KIW to points south, teamsters hauled the cords of birch to railroad sidings. With the railroad in place by 1882, the number of cords of birch cut each season increased dramatically.

The earliest recorded birch logging and milling operation was five miles east of the southern end of the Middle Branch drainage on the East Branch at Horseshoe Pond. In 1879 Jeremiah Fenno, who built a birch bar mill in Milo a year earlier, built a birch bar mill on the south shore of Horseshoe Pond 10 miles north of Brownville at the end of a tote road. His engine house was 20 by 30 feet, the mill 50 by 30, and the drying house 100 by 24; all with 12-foot-high walls. He secured a five-year lease to cut the area's birch and in 1880 he cut on the south shore of Horseshoe Pond. Whether or not he continued the operation after the first five years is unknown. The stock dried before teamsters hauled it to Brownville village for shipping via the railroad.<sup>103</sup>

To help lighten the loads loggers built birch mills in strategic locations. These mills cut the long birch logs into four-foot lengths and some performed one or both of the next two cuts, birch bolts followed by birch bars. Teamsters hauled the end product to a rail siding or the KIW, Brownville, or Milo villages. The Middle Branch area birch mills were at the outlet of Silver Lake; the Liv-

98 a map: "Forest Stand Map, Township B R10 W.E.L.S.," Great Northern Paper Company Woodlands Department, 1953 (at James Sewell Co. archives) and a map "TWP. B Range 10, Great Northern Paper Company Woodlands Department, June 17, 1954" (at Katahdin Timberlands archives)

99 William R. Sawtell, *Ebeemee, North Brownville & the Prairie* (Greenville, ME: Moosehead Communications, 2006)

100 William R. Sawtell, *Ebeemee, North Brownville & the Prairie* (Greenville, ME: Moosehead Communications, 2006)

101 Any of the log drives mentioned in this section appear in summary in the two sections titled, "Calendar of recorded log drives and what is known of them: 1853 – 1947."

102 *The Piscataquis Observer*, May 8, 1947

103 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, November 1, 1879 and February 14, 1880

ingston mill on Juniper Bog Brook less than a mile from the KIW Road; the Moorsville mill, less than a mile to the southwest of the Livingston mill; an unnamed mill nearly on the south town line of TBR11 W.E.L.S. above the northeast corner of T6R9 W.E.L.S.;<sup>104</sup> and another unnamed mill with a nearby dam just above TBR11 W.E.L.S. south town line on the tributary that runs up to Saddle Rock (Saddleback) Mountain. The Mooresville mill was about six miles due west of the Fenno mill at Horseshoe Pond. These mills encompassed a large triangular block of land and were on the perimeter. A road-way connected the mills and others led into the interior.

Birch activity was underway at the KIW village by 1883. O.W. Davis Jr. milled spool bars in 1884. Two years later in 1886 Bailey and Parker of Milo cut birch below the Gulf, and hauled to KIW train stop for shipment to the Milo village mill.<sup>105</sup> The milling in KIW village increased dramatically in 1897, when the Perkins and Danforth Spoolwood Company moved into the vacated ironworks buildings, and cut the birch that grew in the 1825 burn to the east of the village. The mill cut spool bars. Their cut in 1902 was 1,200 cords of birch.<sup>106</sup> The company began cutting birch in TBR11 W.E.L.S. in 1904 (1,368 cords) and did so frequently through 1909. In 1905 their loggers cut 1,923 cords, an unrecorded number of cords in 1907, then 4,132 in 1908, and 291 in 1909.<sup>107</sup> The records of their yearly cut in KIW and Ebeemee townships are unavailable. The company closed its mill in 1921 for want of a sufficient supply of birch.

The Livingston and Moorsville mills were within the Merrill tract, the southern half of the southeast quadrant of KIW township with the West Branch flowing through it. Both settlements appear on an old undated map that was perhaps from c.1900 and a map dated 1939.<sup>108</sup> Lyn Moore and his father resided in Mooresville between at least 1896 and 1909.<sup>109</sup> About 1,200 acres in this tract

burned, probably after 1890 given cruises of late fall 1922 indicated it contained a heavy stand of birch and poplar ranging from two to eight inches. Between 1917 and 1921 loggers cut 1.8 million board feet of softwood, 440 cords of birch and poplar, and 660 railroad ties from the property.<sup>110</sup>

No information other than what was on maps was discovered about the other mills.

Once the Perkins and Danforth birch mill at KIW closed, the community languished; no major mill operator ever moved in. Independent birch loggers cutting in the area hauled to the train siding in town and loaded it on flat cars until train service ended in 1922.<sup>111</sup>

### Other logging operations

Poplar was another tree that seeded into the 1825 burn in substantial quantities in the Middle Branch area. Some poplar reached a pulp and paper mill via the river and some went to market via the railroad, either from a siding on the B&A between Brownville and KIW villages or one between Brownville village and Packard's siding on the B&A to Norcross. In 1883 a Jacob Palmer crew cut poplar to the east of KIW village and drove it on the river to market. Fred Gould landed his poplar in a boom on Silver Lake and drove from there in 1906.<sup>112</sup> Gould cut poplar again in the KIW area in 1912. John Perham and J.F. Dean cut and drove in 1914.<sup>113</sup>

A number of poplar cordwood loggers hauled to the rail line. In 1887 William Peters of Brownville logged between KIW and North Brownville and hauled to a new railroad siding.<sup>114</sup> Babson and Company cut 9,000 cords of pulpwood, probably poplar, along the rail line below KIW in 1903.<sup>115</sup> Albert Green cut 4,270 cords of poplar in TBR11 in 1906, 586 cords in 1921 and an unrecorded amount in 1922.<sup>116</sup>

104 map: "Plan of Township B Range 11 WELS, Piscataquis Co., State of Maine," J.L. Chapman, Milo, 1909; a mill just above the northeast corner of T6R9 W.E.L.S.

105 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, October 14, 1886

106 *The Industrial Journal*, April 1902

107 The Prentiss Papers, Henry Prentiss log and stumpage book; available at University of Maine Raymond Fogler Library Special Collections

108 map: "Plan of T.6 & W1/2 of 5 R. 9 N.W.P. Survey," as explored by R.M. Nason. Great Northern Paper Co. copied this map and remarked it for their purposes in 1939; available at Maine State Archives.

109 William W. Geller, "Piscataquis Projects: Sporting Camps in the

Piscataquis River Watershed, Section B, Katahdin Iron Works Area, 2107;

<https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistory/122>

110 Prentiss Papers, November 24, 1922 letter to Mr. Hosea Buck; available at University of Maine Raymond Fogler Library Special Collections

111 William R. Sawtell, *Katahdin Iron Works & Gulf Hags: Before and Beyond* (Milo, ME: Milo Printing Company, nd).

112 *The Piscataquis Observer*, May 17, 1906

113 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 30, 1914

114 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, November 2, 1887

115 *The Industrial Journal*, January 1902

116 The Prentiss Papers, Henry Prentiss log and stumpage book; available at University of Maine Raymond Fogler Library Special Collections



Two other trees that grew in the 1825 burn and loggers cut in this area were hackmatack and rock maple (sugar maple). A crew of Jacob Palmer's in 1883 harvested hackmatack for ships' knees, and rock maple that they milled at KIW for last blocks; the knees and last blocks went by rail to market.<sup>117</sup> In 1887 Walter K. Spofford cut last blocks in this same area.<sup>118</sup>

What seems remarkable, but was perhaps a vagary in the aftermath of the 1825 fire, is that not one record of cutting pine in this Middle Branch drainage was found. This is especially intriguing in that a major pine logger and sawyer in this area for many years was Ernest Ladd, a local man. This absence is in contrast to the other 1825 burn areas covered in this book.

## West Branch of the Piscataquis River

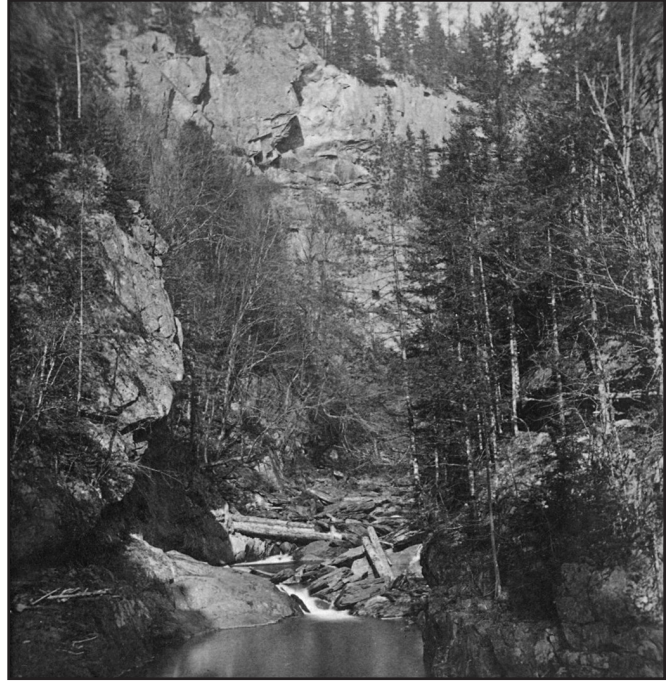
### *Logging summary: 1806–1945*

Once Brownville village had its first settlers in 1806, loggers were probably already cutting the pine on the banks and within easy reach of the West Branch of the Pleasant River (West Branch), and they continued up-river. By 1842 the number of loggers on the river below the Gulf was enough to influence some investors to form the Pleasant River Company to presumably do work that would encourage loggers to cut above the mouth of the Gulf, but what work the company did was apparently unrecorded. Loggers continued their operations below the Gulf until 1852, when a crew built the first dam at the head of the Gulf. The following spring Dorelus Morison drove long logs from the head of the Gulf. Activity above the Gulf for the next 25 years was apparently sporadic. Below the Gulf loggers continued to cut along and near the river, and had a sufficient supply of trees such that they did not consider venturing up any of the tributaries until 1871.

Once logging began on the river's tributaries, they sent a significant number of board feet of logs and pulpwood into the river. The first two tributaries of the West Branch drain from the west and were all in the path of the 1825 fire that delayed loggers' interest until the late 1800s. A limited number of drives took place on Roaring Brook, the first tributary, which lacked any known infrastructure work dedicated to log driving. Houston

Brook drained an extensive area and the presence of its four dams underscores the number of drives.

The other tributaries below the Gulf drained into the river's north side. Big White Brook had major drives beginning in 1880 and continuing into at least the late 1920s. Spruce, Greenwood, White, and Hay brooks, all



*The great deterrent—in 1853, a half century after the start of logging on the river below Gulf Hags, Dorelus Morison conducted the first drive through the Gulf.*

*(William P. Dean, photographer (1874–1879), courtesy of the Maine Historical Preservation Commission, Augusta, Maine (MHPC.S.9855))*

of which drained south off the White Cap Mountain massif, had dams to assist the driving from this challenging logging terrain. Given the terrain challenges, loggers might not have driven them until about 1910; their infrastructure was still in place in the late 1920s. When it was last used is unknown.

The Gulf remained a challenge to drivers and caused drive failures, the last of which was the Jacob Palmer drive in 1878. Undeterred, Palmer's crew blasted and dammed within the Gulf during late 1878 and for the next six years dominated the logging activity above the Gulf. He had cutting crews of 150 men and 44 horses. His river drivers, numbering 80 or more, took 24 to 45 days to drive up to 9–10 million board feet of logs to Old Town. So successful was he that other loggers above the Gulf arranged for his crews to drive their logs.

117 *The Maine Mining Journal*, May 1 and May 25, 1883

118 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, November 2, 1887

Palmer announced that he planned to return to log and drive the river for the years 1887–1890, but he never did, and the logging above the Gulf subsided until about 1890, when pulpwood drives began. In 1893 loggers sent 7 million board feet of pulpwood down the river. During the 1890s Thomas Gilbert was the predominant logger on the river and the yearly log drives continued to include long logs and pulpwood.

The last of the long-log lumber operations occurred between 1906 and 1923. Fleetwood Pride, who opened his pine mill in Brownville village in 1907, cut the pine the pulpwood cutters left standing. Soon after his operation closed, Jordan Lumber Company started cutting and driving, and did so through 1923.

The pulp and paper companies dominated the drives after 1916. Between 1917 and 1923 loggers cut a great number of trees, as a defense against the spruce budworm. By the early 1930s loggers cutting the pulpwood on the upper end of the river in the Big Lyford and West Branch ponds area no longer drove it, tractors hauled it west and drivers drove it through the Roach River system to the Kennebec River. The last drive from above the Gulf was in 1942, a cleanup of the 1941 and earlier drives. The final pulpwood drive was on Houston Brook in 1945 or soon after.

Lumbermen used Lombard log haulers in the KIW area up through at least 1932.<sup>119</sup> One log-hauler road ran from the KIW village mill across the ice of Silver Lake to its northeast corner shore a little east of Big White Brook. From here it went on to connect to two roads. One went over land across the end of the lake to the depot camp south of the junction of the Chamberlain and Pleasant Valley roads. The second was the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road that followed up the west side of Big White Brook. The Lombards brought out the birch from Big White Brook Valley and towed across the lake to the village. They also hauled pulpwood to Silver Lake where crews unloaded it on the ice.<sup>120</sup> No other roads in KIW township have a Lombard label.<sup>121</sup> However, Perkins and Danforth Company probably used them, when their crews cut birch in the eastern half of the township.<sup>122</sup>

119 William R. Sawtell, *Katahdin Iron Works Revisited* (self-published, 1983)

120 William R. Sawtell, *Katahdin Iron Works Revisited* (self-published, 1983)

121 a forest-type cruise map, “Plan of TWP No.6.R.9.N.W.P.,” available at Maine State Archives

122 a map, “Plan of T.6 & W1/2 of 5R.9.N.W.P.” as surveyed and

## **The river’s first 9 miles to KIW village at Silver Lake; the lower section**

### **River landmarks and distances**

Brownville to:

mouths of the East and West branches – 4.6 miles

Roaring Brook – 7.7 miles

Houston Brook – 9.8 miles

Sucker Brook – 10.1 miles

railroad bridge – 12.6 miles

KIW village and dam – 13.7 miles

This lower section of the river had no obstacles and was relatively easy for drive crews to manage. Loggers drove their cuts into this lower part of the river from Roaring and Houston waterways. Prior to the 1825 fire, which burned across this section, small groups of men probably cut the pine on and near the river’s banks and drove it in rafts down river. After the 1825 fire, loggers had nothing to cut in the area, until the birch and poplar matured enough by the late 1870s to once again attract loggers. Whether or not any pine seeded in is unknown; surprisingly, no such cutting records of pine were found. Teamsters hauled the birch to Milo village until 1882 when the B&A began carrying it from KIW to Milo village mills. Loggers drove all the poplar on the river before the arrival of the B&A. Beginning about 1883, when the first pulp and paper mills opened on the Penobscot River, the demand for poplar increased. The last substantial drive that came down the lower river was in 1945 or soon after.

### **The KIW community**

The first and only settlement on the West Branch of the Pleasant River was 13.7 miles above Brownville village at Silver Lake. The first two families opened farms in 1816 above the head of Silver Lake and until about 1840 this area was the center of activity. When the iron works started up in 1843 the village shifted to the outlet. The two large farms at the head of the lake remained active in supplying the iron works and loggers for the next 100 or more years.<sup>123</sup>

explored by R.M. Nason (nd), available at Maine State Archives

123 For more information read Geller, William W., “Piscataquis Project: Sporting Camps in the Piscataquis River Watershed, Section B, Katahdin Iron Works Area” (2017).

<https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistory/122>





The middle of dam at the foot of Silver Lake served river drivers and its far side the Katahdin Iron Works, which operated off and on from 1843 through 1890, and the near side, behind the camera, a saw mill.

(courtesy of Milo Historical Society)

The first families came due north from Sebec village at the foot of Sebec Lake.<sup>124</sup> This route, which became known as the Sebec Road, was the road teamsters, working for the iron works, used until the railroad reached KIW village in 1882. The teamsters hauled lime from Bangor to KIW village and returned with iron piglets. David Pingree, the iron works owner from 1845 to 1863, had logging operations at Chamberlain Lake, and teamsters returning with empty supply sleds also toted the piglets south. The distance shrank in 1869, when the railroad reached South Sebec.

The second road to reach the community went north from Brownville village to North Brownville (Prairie) where it turned westerly, well above the West Branch, to reach the outlet of Silver Lake by at least 1832. This road,

a major logging tote road, continued on to the northwest, reaching Caribou Lake and eventually Chamberlain Lake. In 1848 Pingree invested \$15,000 in this road, known as the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road.

Once the B&A line reached KIW, it immediately began to serve lumbermen and the ironworkers. It brought in people and supplies needed by all enterprises and carried out logs, lumber, iron piglets, and passengers. From Brownville village the line ran along the west side river to its crossing just below the iron works. It provided log drivers easy access to either the river or a loading siding. Train service ended in 1922, but a jitney continued to provide rail transportation for local residents and guests traveling to and from Brownville village. The B&A removed the rails in 1936. Once gone,

124 Joel W. Eastman, *A History of the Katahdin Iron Works*, Masters thesis, University of Maine at Orono, 1965.

Brownville lumberman Ernest Ladd made the abandoned line into a road on which travel cost 25 cents.<sup>125</sup>

KIW village had an active sawmill starting about 1840, when the iron works company built a dam at the end of the lake and set up a mill to meet its needs. The mill at the dam handled a number of operations over the years. In 1884 O.W. Davis Jr. milled spool bars, box boards, and match stock that he shipped via the rail line.<sup>126</sup> Various individuals ran the mill into at least the late 1920s.

The community grew with the development of the iron works. When it was operating, 200 to 400 men, supported by up to 200 oxen and horses, cut and hauled 10,000–12,000 cords of hardwood for charcoal production in the 11 KIW kilns. Each kiln handled 50 cords at a time.<sup>127</sup>

The first blast of the furnace was in 1844, followed by blasts from 1846 through 1856, with no blasts in 1851 or 1852 or between 1857 and 1868. The furnace was rebuilt in 1876, burned in 1883, rebuilt in 1885, and closed after the blast of 1890.<sup>128</sup>

After the iron works closed the community languished until 1897, when the Perkins and Danforth Spoolwood Company opened in the empty iron works buildings. Then it closed in 1921 for want of a sufficient supply of birch, and left those who stayed the options of working in the woods and running sporting camps. No major mill ever moved in. For another year some men cut pulpwood in the area and hauled it to the village's train siding, but then train service ended. The village remained the staging area for the last 20 years of the log drives from above Silver Lake.

Logging involving the river below the KIW village continued through 1945. Ladd may have logged pine or pulpwood along the river, after the B&A removed the rails in 1936. The last pulpwood drives entering the river from Houston Brook occurred between 1942 and 1945. The year of the last drives on Roaring Brook to the river is unknown.



10,000 cords of hardwood per year of operation, as cut by up to 400 men and 200 horses for hauling, fed the 11 charcoal-producing kilns that supplied the Katahdin Iron Works furnace. (William P. Dean, photographer (1865–1875, albumen silver print 84.XC.979.3240), The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Gift of Weston J. and Mary M. Naef)

### Roaring Brook

Roaring Brook, its headwaters being Roaring Pond, flows 3.5 miles southeast from under Roaring Brook Mountain to Barnard township's east town line at Page Brook, where it continues easterly (4 miles) across the northern portion of Williamsburg township to the West Branch. It seems unlikely that loggers cut any appreciable distance up the brook before the 1825 fire. The fire probably engulfed Roaring Brook Pond and crossed the full length of the brook, as it burned on its north-east path into KIW township and beyond. The fire left a large pocket of unburned land in the northern portions of both Barnard and Williamsburg townships. However, given the descriptions of the forest and lack of logging activity before the late 1800s, it probably did not include the area through which the brook flows.

Given that few recorded drives exist and that the brook drains a substantial area with no other waterway close by, many of the poplars and other harvested trees might have also gone to a mill via the Canadian Pacific Railroad (CPR) that opened in 1889. The birch that seeded into the burn went to market via the CPR from the Barnard siding.

<sup>125</sup> William Sawtell, *Katahdin Iron Works Revisited* (self-published, 1983)

<sup>126</sup> *The Maine Mining and Industrial Journal*, May 23, 1884

<sup>127</sup> Joel W. Eastman, *A History of the Katahdin Iron Works*, Masters thesis, University of Maine at Orono, 1965. In 1879 the cut was for 12,000 cords and in 1886 400 men with 200 horses and oxen cut the needed hardwood.

<sup>128</sup> Joel W. Eastman, *A History of the Katahdin Iron Works*, Masters thesis, University of Maine at Orono, 1965.



The sawmill on Roaring Brook (by 1885) was at the Sebec Road crossing.<sup>129</sup> Associated with what was probably a steam-operated mill might have been a dam. What the mill sawed is unknown, but it might have been both birch and pine. Teamsters probably hauled the milled wood to a CPR siding. How much of what was cut in the drainage went to the mill is unknown.

The information pertaining to who logged on the drainage is minimal. In 1892 Foss and Hackett had two camps on the brook, and cut and hauled hardwood for area quarries.<sup>130</sup> Eugene Danforth drove 1.5 million board feet of logs down Roaring Brook in 1899.<sup>131</sup> Someone had a drive on the brook in 1906.<sup>132</sup>

### **Houston Brook**

#### **Landmarks, dams and distances**

Mouth of Houston Brook at the West Branch to:  
 first dam – .9 miles  
 mouth of Little Houston Pond Stream – 1 mile  
 second dam – 2.6 miles  
 dam at outlet Big Houston Pond – 3.7 miles  
 Big Houston Pond's inlet – 5.2 miles  
 Mud Pond – 5.5 miles  
 South Pond – 5.9 miles  
 Camp Pond – 6.5 miles  
 dam at Dam (Indian) Pond – 7.1 miles  
 head of Dam Pond – 9 miles  
 Sampson Pond – 9.4 miles  
 Lucia Pond – 10.1 miles

#### **Infrastructure**

When the dams were first built within the Houston Brook watershed is unknown. The 400-foot long and 12-foot head dam on Big Houston Pond was functioning in summer 1880, but whether or not the two on Houston Brook or the one at Dam Pond were in place is unknown.<sup>133</sup> The stream's first dam was nearly a mile from the West Branch at the foot of a long deadwater. The second dam was about 1.1 miles below Big Houston Pond dam and at the head of another long deadwater.<sup>134</sup>

129 *Piscataquis County Maine Map* (Houlton & Dover, ME: George Colby, 1882)

130 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, December 30, 1892

131 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, January 10, 1899

132 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 26, 1906

133 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, July 15, 1880

134 a map: "Plan of TWP No. 6 R. 9." Forest-type cruising plan, nd; available at Maine State Archives

A T7R9 N.W.P. township report of 1929 indicated that the dams at Big Houston and Dam ponds needed rebuilding, as did the sluice at the Big Houston Pond dam.<sup>135</sup> A similar report for 1945 for T6R9 N.W.P. assessed Houston Brook as drivable, but the old dams were nearly gone and needed repair before driving.<sup>136</sup>

Loggers accessed Big Houston Pond via two roads, both starting in KIW village. One went southwesterly from the village to the dam on Houston Brook just below the mouth of the stream from Little Houston Pond, continued westerly crossing the brook from Little Houston Pond to a logging camp and reached the second dam on Big Houston Stream; it crossed here and followed the stream to Big Houston Pond at its dam. The other road went west from KIW village to the landing at the northeast corner on the pond and crossed on the ice to reach the tote road at the northwest corner, where it continued around the north side of Mud, South, and Camp ponds to reach the dam at Dam Pond. The last time this road showed on a map seems to be on Sewall's 1929 map that was part of the township's assessment.

One of the Big Houston Pond's log landings was at the northeast corner at the end of the tote road from KIW village via Ore Mountain. Loggers probably used it prior to 1895, when Frank Tibbetts built Big Houston Camps at the landing. His main camp was on the north side of the landing and his sleeping cabins were on the south side. The large open landing area, which became a meadow over time, was the sporting camp's yard. Any logging operations that used it would have left at ice out before the sporting camp opened for the season.

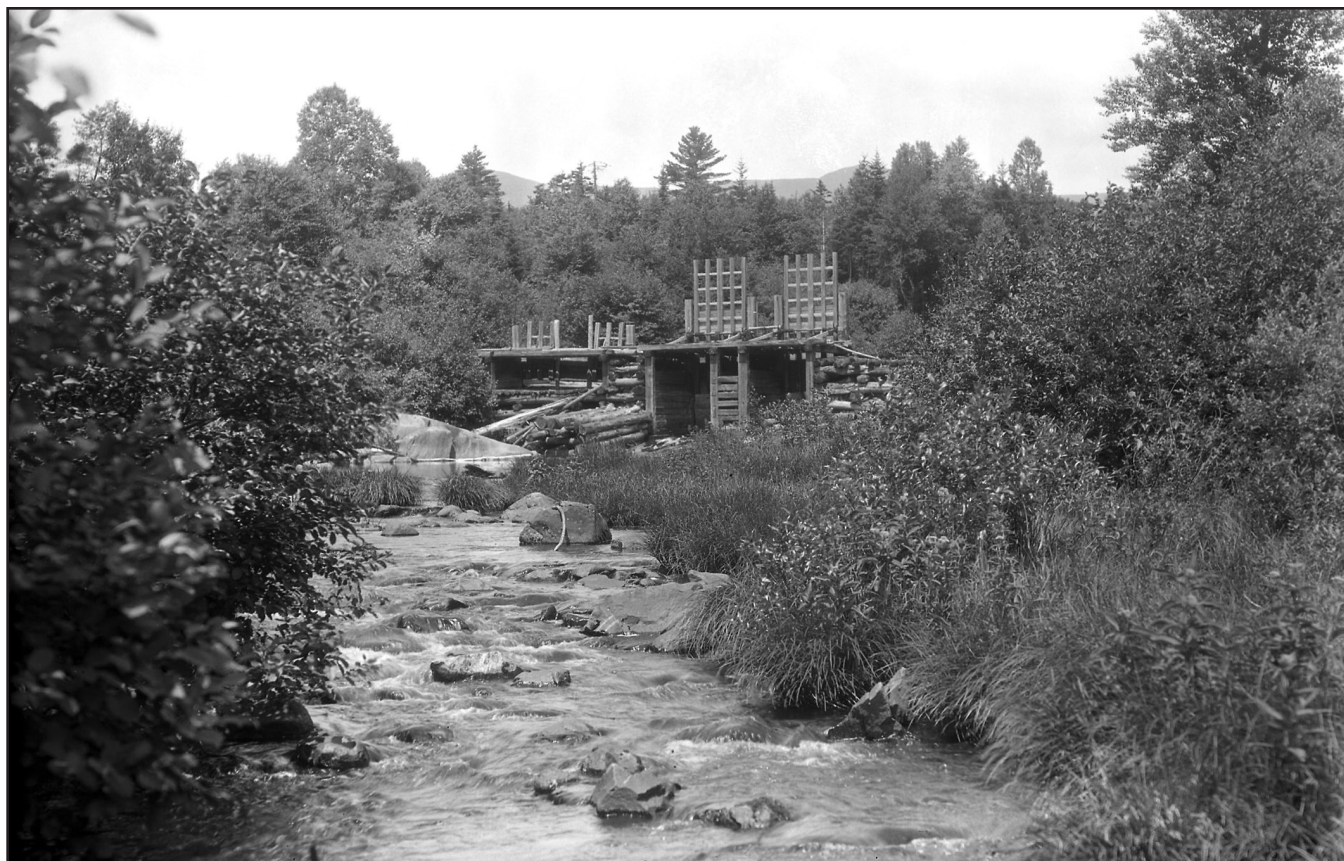
#### **Log drive operations**

What little is known about logging operations in this drainage helps to formulate what more might have transpired. Given the remoteness of the drainage, the size of the streams, and the easier access to other sources of pine in the early 1800s, loggers probably did not penetrate this drainage before the 1825 fire.

The 1825 fire burned into the drainage from the southwest, coming through the Barron-Benson gap and across Lucia Pond, Caribou Bog, Roaring Brook

135 *Report of Exploration of Twp7R9 N.W.P. 1929*; available at Maine State Archives

136 *Report of Exploration of Twp6R9 N.W.P. 1945*; available at Maine State Archives



One of more than 20 rock crib dams on a 25 mile stretch of the East Branch of the Pleasant River. (photo by Bert Call, Bert Call Collection, image courtesy of Special Collections Raymond H. Fogler Library, DigitalCommons@UMaine)

Mountain, and perhaps the south end of Big Houston Pond, the south side of the drainage. Abutting the north side of the drainage is the base of the Barren Chairback range, which apparently did not burn.

The earliest indicator of logging in the drainage is the 1880 report of the dam at the outlet of Big Houston Pond.<sup>137</sup> The lumbermen's investment in a dam of such a substantial size and at least one on the brook suggested that they would use it for multiple years and that they intended to drive a large number of long logs. This construction also suggests that the 1825 fire left a large unburned block of land, probably the northern end of the pond and to its east. No saw logs from rejuvenated trees in the burn would have been mature enough at this time. However, it does seem likely that the path of the 1825 fire was close to or crossed the lower three or four miles of Houston Brook given its burning through the area just east of KIW village.

<sup>137</sup> *Acts and Resolves and Special Laws of the State of Maine passed by the Legislature of the state of Maine, 1879, Pleasant River Dam and Improvement Company.*

Well established Bangor lumbermen, Manuel Drummond, Frank Drummond, Eben Coe, James Smith, and William McCrillis, investors in the dams, recognized the value of the forest accessible to Big Houston Pond and stream. As they completed their cutting around Big Houston, they might have continued up the watershed through three tiny ponds, Mud, South, and Camp, to Dam Pond where they built the uppermost dam. A dam here enabled them to flush the saw-logs cut on the north side of the drainage down a tiny stream into Big Houston Pond. It also flooded out the rocks in the narrows above the dam and that enabled towed boom bags to reach the dam. However, their 1879 charter did not include this dam.

Loggers working up the Big Houston drainage probably did not go too far down the north edge of Dam Pond. Close to the south edge of the pond is an expansive low area that burned in the 1825 fire and it drains due south to Sebec Lake. This area remained unlogged until 1912, when Joseph Ray began a major operation that lasted for about four years. He contracted for a rail



line from the CPR at what became known as Kuroki siding. The line twisted north along the Caribou Bog out-



*River driving depended on maintained dams, like this one on lower Houston Brook with the freshly debarked logs of the cribwork on the right side. The spring water flow, funneled through the dam with the logs, helped move the long logs through the deadwater below the dam. The drive crew left some logs behind.*

*(William P. Dean, photographer (1865–1875, albumen silver print 84.XC.979.3229), The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Gift of Weston J. and Mary M. Naef)*

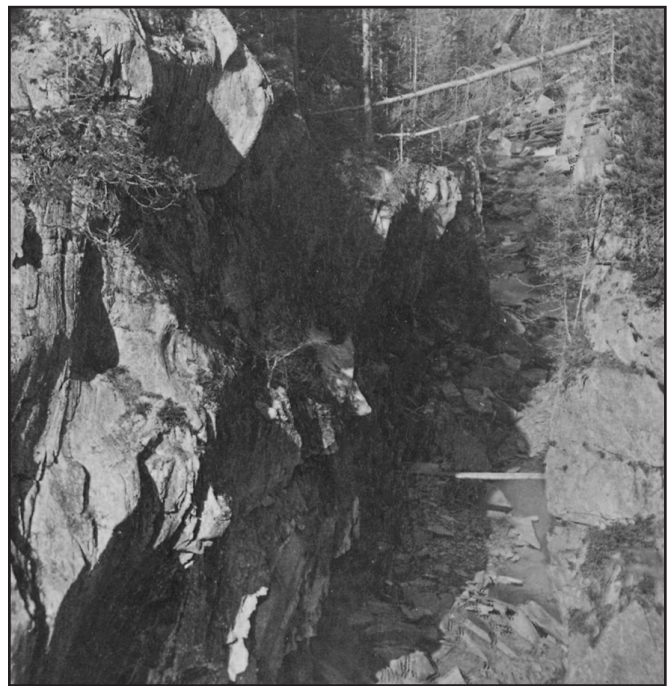
let stream passing between Benson and Roaring Brook mountains and then bent around the west-most end of the Big Houston drainage, Lucia, Sampson, and Dam (Indian) ponds. His loggers cut trees that seeded in after the fire. He built two sawmills, one for birch and other hardwood, and one for softwood. All his milled lumber went to market via the rails.

In support of the mills, he built a dam and community at the outlet of Caribou Bog. The settlement included a boarding house, 20 homes, and a school. In 1916 the mills burned and a lack of mature trees to cut caused his investors to abandon the operation.<sup>138</sup> Beginning about 1920 ATCo bought the lands between the bog and the CPR and logged the birch that Ray's crews left uncut.

Other loggers might not have returned to the area for at least another 20 years.

The record of who cut where in what years on the drainage from Dam Pond to the West Branch is incomplete. By deduction, loggers cut in the 1880s. Jordan Lumber Company began cutting in 1896 and continued through 1902.<sup>139</sup> William Engel drove 3 million board feet of logs in 1902. Bert Call pictures of the area east of Big Houston in 1927 showed signs of logging, but whether or not the logs went into Big Houston drainage is unknown. In the 1930s Columbus Lumber Company logged on the south side of Columbus and Chairback mountains, but where teamsters hauled the logs is unknown. They could have gone to the West Branch.

The Sewell 1929 assessment of T7R9 N.W.P., the land west from the dam at Big Houston Pond, noted the Big Houston and Dam ponds' dams needed repairs, and



*From this river driver's observation cliff point 130 feet above the floor of Gulf Hags, log drivers watched for log jams, and when they formed they lowered each other on rope tethers so they could break the jam and then get quickly pulled back from of the violent rush of logs and water.*

*(William P. Dean, photographer (1874–1879), courtesy of the Maine Historical Preservation Commission, Augusta, Maine (MHPC.S.9868))*

<sup>138</sup> R. Michael White maintains a website that captures the history of this mill community; google "History of Ray's Mill – TDS-Net."

<sup>139</sup> *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, May 8, 1896 and May 18, 1897

heavy previous cutting with no indicators of when it took place. At a minimum this indicated loggers continued to drive the stream into the 1920s. Whether lumbermen cut saw logs or pulpwood or both during this era is unknown.

Given the state of the Big Houston dam in 1929 and the dams below that in 1945, it seems probable that loggers did not repair the dam at the outlet of Big Houston following the 1929 report. The report of 1945 for land east of the Big Houston Pond dam acknowledged that loggers could drive the stream, but they needed to rebuild dams. However, between 1942 and 1945 loggers drove pulpwood on the lower 3 miles of Houston Brook. The 1945 assessment was in preparation for future logging in KIW township.<sup>140</sup> Given the advent of trucking after WWII, the 1945 drive might have been the last on the stream.

### ***The river above KIW village***

#### ***River landmarks and distances***

Brownville to:

- mouth of the West Branch – 4.6 miles
- KIW village and dam – 13.7 miles
- mouth of river on Silver Lake – 14.3 miles
- mouth Big White Brook at head of Silver Lake – 14.8 miles
- White Brook – 20.3 miles
- Hay Brook – 21.2 miles
- The Hermitage – 21.8 miles
- Gulf Hagas Brook – 22.6 miles
- The Jaws – 23.9 miles
- Buttermilk Falls – 24.3 miles
- Billings Falls – 25.0 miles
- dam at head of the Gulf – 25.1 miles
- dam at Little Lyford camp – 27.25 miles
- Mountain Brook – 28.0 miles
- Baker Mountain Brook and dam area – 30.8 miles
- Big Lyford Stream – 33.0 miles
- First West Branch Pond dam – 35.4 miles
- head of pond – 36.3 miles
- Second Pond dam – 36.1 miles
- head of Third Pond – 38.0 miles

The 1825 fire passed just east of Silver Lake so loggers continued to log from the outlet up river. However, it

was another 28 years before loggers cut above Gulf Hagas (the Gulf). Their drives into the lake on the river below the Gulf did not need infrastructure. The same was true for those cutting along Big White Brook and driving into the lake. Someone built the dam at the foot of lake some year between 1816, when the first settlers arrived at the head of the lake, and the early 1840s, when crews had a dam for the sawmill that cut the lumber for the iron works structures. The dam also helped loggers move their logs down the river.

Those who dreamed of logging above the mouth of the Gulf knew infrastructure was paramount to any effort. The first reflection of that was an 1843 dam charter granted by the Maine state legislature. No apparent action transpired for the first nine years, but in 1852 another company received a charter and built a dam at the head of the Gulf. Even with the dam, drive failures occurred and it was not until 1880 that lumbermen finally mastered the Gulf, after a great deal of infrastructure work. Such work on the river to enhance the drive continued into the 1920s and it included the tributaries above Silver Lake.

#### ***Infrastructure on the river and its tributaries***

Dams on the river at:

- outlet of Silver Lake
- head of Gulf Hagas
- below Little Lyford
- below mouth of Baker Mountain Brook
- outlet of Big Lyford Pond
- outlet of First West Branch Pond
- outlet of Second West Branch Pond

Dams on the tributaries

- Big White and Spruce Mountain brooks
  - on Big White Brook 3.5 miles upstream
  - a mile-long sluice to Big White Brook
- White and Greenwood brooks
  - not far above mouth of Greenwood Brook and at the pond's outlet
  - on White Brook above mouth of Greenwood Brook

Hay Brook

- due west of dam on White Brook
- at foot of its headwater bowl

Gulf Hagas Brook:

- no known dam on stream

Big Lyford Pond:

- dam at outlet

<sup>140</sup> *Report of Exploration of Twp6R9 N.W.P. 1945* (KIW township); available at Maine State Archives

### **Calendar of dam charters, river improvement work, and river assessments**

**1843:** The Pleasant River Company formed with a charter from the Maine state legislature, but it seemed to have either not materialized as planned or soon failed. Their probable one dam was at the foot of Silver Lake and the iron works company, which had a sawmill there, likely took it over.

**1852:** John Mayo, W.B.S. Moor, Dorelus Morison, and R.S. Morison formed the West Branch Pleasant River Company and built a dam at the head of the Gulf. What other river infrastructure or river improvements the company made is unknown. The charter extended no rights to any tributaries.

The rock crib dam at the Gulf's head was supposedly 40 feet high and 825 feet long. My exploration on both sides of the river, at and above the head, yielded no signs of either dam remains or abutting banks that could accommodate the dam's dimensions. I searched just below the head, at the foot of the first falls, Stair Falls, where the topography of a topographical map accommodates the dam's dimensions. A granite spine forces the water going over Stair Falls to the right and in 150 feet the river is forced by cliff to make a 45-degree turn. The dam could have been based on the granite spine dissecting the 45-degree turn and gone through a break in the far side cliff.<sup>141</sup>

**1871:** The Katahdin Dam Company formed and took over the charter of the West Branch Pleasant River Company. The new charter included all tributaries. Ten years later the legislature approved their request for an increase in log tolls.

**1879:** The Maine state legislature chartered the Pleasant River Dam and Improvement Company for dams at the foot of Houston Pond and on Houston Brook.

*The Piscataquis Observer* reported in its April 29, 1879 issue that Jacob W. Palmer and Sons (Walter E. and

George) with 30 men intended to erect a new dam at the site of the one at the head of the Gulf, and blast and straighten some sharp corners within the Gulf.<sup>142</sup> Their crew also blasted the narrow 7–8 foot wide sections of the Gulf, removed boulders from the gorge floor, and built some roll dams within it.<sup>143</sup> Between July 4, 1879 and October 4, 1879 another Palmer crew with 65 men under the direction of John Crane built 11 miles of road, four bridges, and another dam 6 miles above the foot of the Gulf, near Little Lyford Ponds. The dam was 200 feet long and 35 feet wide with 16 feet of head, and three 8-foot gates.<sup>144</sup>

**1880:** William McCrillis went to the Maine state legislature seeking a charter to dam the river below the mouth of Big Lyford Pond's outlet brook area so as to reverse the flow of the river through Big Lyford Pond and into the Roach River system of the Kennebec River watershed. The legislature defeated the measure.<sup>145</sup>

**1883:** In August Palmer's crew was back on the river at the Gulf making additional improvements for the flow of logs.<sup>146</sup> They also strung a phone line up the river to his camp.<sup>147</sup>

**1884:** T.N. Egery built a dam at the first set of rapids below Silver Lake and set up a clapboard and shingle mill. He used Silver Lake for log storage.<sup>148</sup>

**1885:** Someone replaced the dam at KIW.<sup>149</sup>

**1894:** In December the Howland Pulp and Paper Company petitioned the legislature to construct and maintain dams on the West Branch.<sup>150</sup> At the same time the Piscataquis Iron Works Company petitioned the legislature to repair and enlarge the dam at Silver Lake.<sup>151</sup>

**1895:** The Pleasant River Dam Company bought the Katahdin Dam Company with the rights to the dams.

**1913–1914:** The Pleasant River Gulf Improvement Company formed and received a legislative charter for erecting and maintaining dams on the river at Second and First West Branch Ponds, Big Lyford, one above the

141 A 40-foot high dam at the literal head of the Gulf would have flooded out the Pleasant Valley Tote Road when the water reached a depth of 20 feet, only half of the dam's available head. There are no signs on either side of the river of a once huge broad impoundment. A dam dissecting the 45 degree turn floods out the 45 degree turn, all of Stair Falls above it, the two islands at the head of the gulf, and the first four 90 degree bends up river. From a log drivers perspective eliminating the 45 degree turn and flooding out Stair Falls removes two highly probably log jam sites. By placing the dam's log sluice toward the north end of the dam the near-90 degree turn in the river just below the dam, is minimized leaving nearly a straight path down river to just below the Jaws.

142 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, April 29, 1879

143 *The Piscataquis Observer*, July 15, 1880 and April 27, 1882

144 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, July 15, 1880

145 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, February 17, 1880 and *Boston Daily Advertiser*, February 11, 1880

146 *The Maine Sportsman*, June 1902 p.209

147 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, August 30, 1883

148 *The Industrial Journal*, October 10, 1884

149 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, October 2, 1885

150 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, November 30, 1894 and December 15, 1894

151 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, December 10, 1894



Gulf, and any others. The company could also open and work on any tributaries.

**1927:** An assessment of the river in 1927 indicated that it was in good condition for driving both pulpwood and long logs. If a drive were to come out of Big Lyford or First or Second West Branch ponds, then their dams needed rebuilding. The dam at First West Branch Pond had an 8-foot head and a gate. The dam at Second Pond also had a gate. The camp for 40 men and 12 horses at the head of the Gulf was in good condition, as was the road through the Gulf.<sup>152</sup>

**1929:** A mile-long sluice dumped logs near and into Big White Brook. The dates of construction and exact location of the sluice are unknown. Given loggers used such sluices on steep terrain, it came down either the west slope of Saddle Rock Mountain or, more likely, the east slope of Big Shanty Mountain. The early presence of logging haul roads on the side of Saddle Rock suggested that was not the most likely site. An early road, present as early as 1927, went straight up the narrow steep ravine of Shanty Brook to the saddle between Big and Little Shanty mountains, a route steep enough to perhaps challenge the capabilities of a snubbing strategy for lowering loaded log sleds. A depot camp, that served loggers in the Spruce Mountain Pond area, was on Big White Brook not far below the mouth of Shanty Brook. No other roads were on the mountain in the vicinity of Shanty Brook.<sup>153</sup>

**1945:** An assessment of Silver Lake's outlet dam, owned by the Piscataquis Iron Works Corporation, indicated it was 100 feet long with 50-foot wing dams at each end and two gates for sluicing. The dam had undergone some repairs in 1944, but was in poor condition, as was the old rail bridge and rail line surface between Brownville to KIW villages.<sup>154</sup>

### **Log drive organization**

As late as the 1850s some lumbermen drove their logs in rafts, which kept the small crews' logs together, so they did not mix with those of other loggers. Most years the lumbermen drove independently and cooperatively. In



*A constant loud rumble punctuated by cannon-like explosions echoed across the valley with every log that flew off the end of the steep icy sluice and landed in the growing mountain of logs, as would be the case with this one on Baker Mountain and those elsewhere in the Piscataquis watershed on Boardman and Barren mountains and in the Big White Brook valley area. (courtesy of Bill Cobb)*

years when more than a few lumbermen cut on the river, they often drove as a collective, but they never formed a river driving association.

Drives came down the river from the uppermost ponds of the drainage, First Branch Ponds and Big Lyford, both of which had dams for sluicing. For drives starting in this area, the drive camp, which might have also been a cutting camp, was nearby. Some men worked on the ponds to bring the logs to the dam, and others sluiced and worked at key jamming points and each dam down river. The drive boss probably had his men keep the drive moving through the next two dams, which had a nearby camp, and had them hold the logs in a boom at the dam at the head of the Gulf, the site of another drive camp, until the rear either arrived or was not far up river.

<sup>152</sup> *Report of Exploration of TwpAR12 W.E.L.S. 1927*; available at Maine State Archives

<sup>153</sup> a map, "Timber Map Township B Range 11 Piscataquis County, ME, 1919," George T. Carlisle Jr.; available at University of Maine Raymond Fogler Library Special Collections

<sup>154</sup> *Report of Exploration of Twp6R9 N.W.P. 1945* (KIW township); available at Maine State Archives

Moving logs through the Gulf sometimes went well and other times jams occurred. In 1878 Palmer's drive got hung up, but two years later, after much infrastructure work, his 80-man crew put 2 million board feet of logs through the Gulf in four hours. Men placed along the top edge of the Gulf watched for jams. The drivers had walkways spanning the Gulf at narrow points, so men could lower others in to breakup the jams. In 1883 Palmer had a phone line up the Gulf and might have used call boxes for reporting the action within the Gulf. Prior to phones, and on days when they did not work, runners carried the news back and forth. With the dams above the Gulf, the drive boss could control the flow of logs into it, and release a volume of water that would break apart the jam. For 20 years beginning about 1922 The Hermitage served as the operations center for the drives from above the Gulf.

Between the foot of the Gulf and Silver Lake the river drivers used bateaux and canoes for assistance. Drivers used camps at the mouth of Hay Brook and White Brook, if drives were coming down those streams. Sometimes the men camped on the river above Silver Lake near Camp Comfort. The farm on the river above the head of the lake and the depot camp near the road junction at the head of the lake also served the drivers. At KIW village they camped in an open area east of the iron works unless the KIW village boarding house was available.<sup>155</sup>

At the head of Silver Lake the drivers captured the logs in boom bags and towed them with a headworks, and in later years boats, to the outlet at KIW village.

How they managed the river between KIW village and the Brownville village dam is unknown. This section of the river had braided sections, which could complicate the driving, but might have been inconsequential with high water, or side dams or booms lining the route. For some drive bosses the drive camp below KIW was at "Billy Gray's" rip just above Brownville Junction and for others it was in a field closer to Brownville.<sup>156</sup> The crew collected the logs in booms above the Brownville village dam before proceeding on down river. The drive boss wanted to be sure his logs got into the Piscataquis River without mixing with drives on that river. With less than ideal water levels, the forward portion of a large drive



*Men with only hand tools and oxen or horses worked yearly on improving the log driving conditions on the West Branch of the Pleasant River, on this day below the dam at Katahdin Iron Works.*

(William P. Dean, photographer (1865–1875, albumen silver print 84.XC.979.3226), The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Gift of Weston J. and Mary M. Naef)

of 9–10 million board feet of logs from above the Gulf could take 25 days to reach Brownville and another 20 days to reach Old Town on the Penobscot River.

#### ***Calendar of recorded log drives and what is known of them: 1853–1947***<sup>157</sup>

**1853:** Dorelus Morison and Company and perhaps others, drove 350,000 board feet of logs through the Gulf with the support of a dam at its head. The following year even more logs were in the drive, but not all that the loggers cut.<sup>158</sup>

**1858:** Someone spent \$15,000 and cut 2.5 million board feet of logs above the Gulf, but had an unsuccessful drive.<sup>159</sup>

**1869:** Deep snows and no rain in the KIW area made logging exceedingly difficult and one crew was all but trapped. With their supplies gone and no one able to

<sup>155</sup> William Sawtell, *Katahdin Iron Works Revisited* (self-published, 1983)

<sup>156</sup> William Sawtell, *Katahdin Iron Works Revisited* (self-published, 1983)

<sup>157</sup> Detailed options for management of log drives on lakes, rivers, and streams (brooks) are in chapter two. A higher level of detail is in Bill Geller's, *Within Katahdin's Realm: log drives and sporting camps*, which is online at the University of Maine Raymond Fogler Digital Commons.

<sup>158</sup> *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, April 29, 1879 and July 15, 1880

<sup>159</sup> *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 27, 1882





*"Dean's roller coaster," so called by loggers, with William P. Dean, the designer, builder, and photographer, was the only way to get back and forth across the West Branch of the Pleasant River during the high water and log driving season.*

*(William P. Dean, photographer (1874–1911), David G. Smith Papers, image courtesy of Special Collections Raymond H. Fogler Library, DigitalCommons@UMaine)*

reach them, they killed the poorest horses and put the others on sleds that the men on snowshoes towed out.<sup>160</sup>

**1873:** Phillip Randall found an abandoned lumber camp at Little Lyford Ponds on the river and that suggests someone drove the river at some previous time.

**1878:** The Palmer drive failed as a result of the challenges of the Gulf. He returned with a crew and made river improvements that included blasting the narrow 7–8 foot wide sections of the Gulf, removing boulders from the gorge floor, and building some roll dams within the Gulf and a dam with gates at its head.<sup>161</sup>

**1879:** Palmer cut and drove 2.5 million board feet of logs. Phillip Randall and his son Charles found another abandoned logging camp at about the midpoint on the west side of First West Branch Pond. The presence of this camp suggests some lumberman drove the river a few years earlier.

**1880:** The Palmer logging crew numbered 150 men and 44 horses. The crews cut 2 million board feet of logs

above the Gulf and 2.5 million below. His 80-man drive crew started May 1 and in 20 hours the drive was at the head of the Gulf and in another four hours the drive had exited the Gulf. The drive was in the boom above Old Town by May 30.<sup>162</sup> One of Palmer's camps was on White Brook.<sup>163</sup> Also logging on White Brook was Joseph Gaffney.

**1881:** Palmer's drive from above and below the Gulf included 9–10 million board feet of logs. The crew cutting above the Gulf numbered 140 men; he had 125 men with 28 horses on Big White Brook.<sup>164</sup> One man fell into the sluice of the dam at the head of the Gulf and died.<sup>165</sup> It took 25 days for the forward part of the drive to reach Brownville village and the rear was in Silver Lake. Other drives were progressing slowly for want of rain. The

160 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, March 25, 1869

161 *The Piscataquis Observer*, July 15, 1880 and April 27, 1882 and *The Maine Sportsman*, June 1902, p.209

162 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, July 15, 1880

163 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, November 3, 1879

164 *Daily Kennebec Journal*, October 27, 1881

165 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, May 17, 1881



pay for a river man ranged from two to three dollars per day.<sup>166</sup> The drive took 43 days to get to Old Town.<sup>167</sup>

**1882:** Palmer was back again operating 10–15 miles above Silver Lake. He cut 8 million board feet of spruce, a half million board feet of pine, had a million board feet of logs left from last year, and agreed to drive Murphy's cut of 2 million board feet of logs. About half these logs came through the Gulf. Michael Burke was his drive boss, whom he paid \$1200.<sup>168</sup> Of his 250 man crew, 50 worked the drive below the Gulf,<sup>169</sup> and 130 engaged in cutting a channel through the ice on Silver Lake, so the drive could commence in late April.<sup>170</sup> The water was low and Palmer had to use the water of the river's four major dams and those on the small tributary ponds carefully. He had calculated that due to available water only 2.5 of the 6 million board feet of logs might reach the Penobscot boom. Palmer set his drive camp outside of Brownville and at the end of each day teamsters picked up his men along the river to transport them to the camp. The front of the drive was in the Penobscot River at the same time the rear was going through the dam at the head of the Gulf.<sup>171</sup>

**1883:** The Palmer crew of 110 men cut and drove 8 million board feet of long spruce logs that came from above Silver Lake. The drive included his 4 million board feet of logs and another 4 million as cut by Moses B. Wadleigh of Old Town and three other loggers.<sup>172</sup> Following the main drive, Palmer's crew drove another of 1.4 million board feet of poplar for the paper mill at Great Works.<sup>173</sup>

Other loggers that season may have been impacted by severe winds of about November 16, 1883. They started in Shirley township, came down the Piscataquis River, and then up to KIW township and the Gulf before turning northeast through Ebeemee township.<sup>174</sup>

**1884:** Palmer's crew of 150 men with 60 horses cut 6–7 million board feet of logs.<sup>175</sup> His drive arrived in Brownville village about May 22. J. Holbrook had a drive of 500,000 board feet of logs and its destination was a

Brownville village sawmill.<sup>176</sup> The Stratton, Engel and Gilman crew of 65 men and 14 horses cut 3.5 million board feet of logs at an unknown place on the river.<sup>177</sup>

**1885:** The William Engel Company had a drive on the Pleasant River, presumably originating on the West Branch.<sup>178</sup> Atwell and McLeod with a crew of 50 men and 12 horses cut some place on the river and drove it.<sup>179</sup>

**1886:** Palmer did not log on the Pleasant River and planned to be back on the river the next few years, but no discovered documents reported such activity.<sup>180</sup>

**1887:** John Crane's drive reached the head of the Gulf on May 10 and it took two days to sluice the cut through the Gulf. His logging team of about 36 men used 12 horses.<sup>181</sup>

The following lumbermen cut at unknown locations on either the East or the West branch: F.M. Cunningham with 20 horses and about 60 men 30 miles above Brownville village, E.L. Chase with 4 horses and a dozen men, Briggs with 30 horses and 8 oxen and maybe 90 men, C. Murphy with 20 horses and 60 men, Parker and Bailey with 12 horses and about 36 men, and White and L.F. Stratton with 10 horses and 30 men each.<sup>182</sup>

**1889:** Andy Billings' drive from some place up river was in at Briggs' Brownville village sawmill by April 18. L.C. Moore's drive to one of the Brownville village mills was also in by April 18. The Chase drive with 30 men was in Brownville village about April 20.<sup>183</sup>

**1891:** Mel Whitten started his drive on Spruce Mountain Stream<sup>184</sup> and White and Crane landed their cut on Silver Lake. The drive to Briggs mill was in and the mill was running at maximum capacity by May 14.<sup>185</sup>

**1892:** The White and Crane drive was entering the Brownville village boom and the rear of the drive was below the KIW village dam as of June 2. The J.D. McLeod and Son's and the Webster and Walton drives also passed through Brownville village from an unknown location

166 *The Piscataquis Observer*, May 12 and May 19, 1881

167 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 27, 1882

168 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, June 12, 1882

169 *The Piscataquis Observer*, May 18, 1882

170 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 27, 1882

171 *The Maine Mining Journal*, May 19, 1882

172 *The Maine Mining Journal*, February 9, 1883.

173 *The Maine Mining Journal*, May 1 and May 25, 1883

174 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, November 16, 1883

175 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, January 31, 1884

176 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, January 31, 1884 and *The Piscataquis Observer*, May 22, 1884

177 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, January 31, 1884

178 *The Piscataquis Observer*, May 21, 1885

179 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, September 30, 1884

180 *The Industrial Journal*, May 7, 1886

181 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 7, May 5 and May 19, 1887

182 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 7, 1887

183 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 18, 1889

184 Theodore Lincoln Smith, *Some notes on a two-week trip to Katahdin Iron Works and B-Pond*, 18 September 1920 to 4 October 1920; available at the University of Maine Folklore Center

185 *The Piscataquis Observer*, May 14, 1891

on the West Branch.<sup>186</sup> The Chase drive was for Briggs' sawmill in Brownville village.<sup>187</sup>

**1893:** A.J. Smart, drive boss for Knowles and Wilder of Milo and other parties, had a crew of 50 men drive 7 million board feet of pulpwood through Silver Lake for the Howland Falls Pulp Company.<sup>188</sup> The other parties might have been: Gilbert who logged near KIW village with 12 horses and about 40 men, and W.H. Murphy with six horses and about 20 men.<sup>189</sup>

**1895:** Thomas Gilbert cut in TAR12 W.E.L.S. and drove from the upper end of the West Branch.

**1896:** Gilbert's drive of 3.5 million board feet of logs from above the Gulf left KIW village on May 3.<sup>190</sup> McLaughlin was also driving from above the Gulf with 2 million board feet of logs.<sup>191</sup> The Jordan and Comstock drive to the river on Houston Brook did not start due to ice on the pond until after May 8.<sup>192</sup>

**1897:** Gilbert's drive from above KIW village included 4 million board feet of logs.<sup>193</sup> Other drives included those of Katahdin Pulp and Paper Company (Lincoln) and Howland Pulp and Paper Company.<sup>194</sup> The Briggs drive was at his mill by April 30. The Jordan and Comstock drive got down Houston Brook to the river, where low water hung the drive.<sup>195</sup>

**1897–1902:** Some time during this period loggers cut the south slope of Baker Mountain in T8R10 N.W.P. and hauled to the West Branch. As of 1922 no one had returned to cut in that area.<sup>196</sup>

**1897:** S.A. Thomas and Son drove 150,000 board feet of pine and spruce out of Whetstone Brook into the river and boomed them.<sup>197</sup>

**1899:** Gilbert, who logged on the Piscataquis River in 1898, was back on the West Branch and his drive passed

through Brownville village on May 6, after having been hung for 2 days.<sup>198</sup> Eugene Danforth drove 1.5 million board feet of logs down Roaring Brook to the river.<sup>199</sup> Largay and Sons logged near the river in T7R9 N.W.P. about 4 miles above Silver Lake and hauled to the river.<sup>200</sup>

**1900:** Packard and Sawyer, Weymouth Brothers, and Largay had drives that came across Silver Lake. Wadleigh cut poplar near KIW village and drove it to the Bangor area.<sup>201</sup> The Packard and Sawyer drive cleared the Brownville village dam Saturday May 19. High water from above the dam broke their boom and created havoc.

**1901:** Wadleigh did not drive his poplar cut and instead hauled it to the rail line at KIW village.

**1901–1902:** Loggers cut in the area of First, Second, Third West Branch Ponds, the headwaters of the West Branch.<sup>202</sup> Much older logging took place higher up on the north slopes of White Cap Mountain, where the reproduction of spruce in 1922 was excellent and dense virgin stands still existed.

**1901–1902:** Drives came into the river from Houston Brook. Jordan and Comstock drove it in 1901.<sup>203</sup> Their drive in 1902 was 800,000 board feet of logs<sup>204</sup> and William Engel drove 3 million board feet.<sup>205</sup>

**1902–1907:** Loggers cut most of the spruce below Baker Mountain Brook and cruisers assessed the reproduction as fair in 1922.

**1902:** The first drive through Brownville village was the Weymouth drive of a million board feet of logs; a crew was sluicing it on May 8.<sup>206</sup> An active logging camp that season was above the dam at the head of the Gulf, but whether or not that was Weymouth's is unconfirmed.<sup>207</sup> Wadleigh had a drive of a little over a million board feet of logs, and O.B. Packard of Medford Center had 2 million board feet of logs coming from above the Gulf.<sup>208</sup> Daniel W. Moulton drove his cut of 400,000 board feet of logs from below the Gulf.

186 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, June 28, 1892

187 *The Piscataquis Observer*, March 24, 1892

188 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 20 and May 4, 1893

189 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, December 30, 1892

190 *Industrial Journal* February 14, 1896 and *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, May 8, 1896;

191 *The Industrial Journal*, April 10, 1896

192 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, May 8, 1896

193 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 1, 1897

194 The Howland Falls Pulp Company formed in 1893; in 1897, it became the Howland Pulp Company; in 1904, Howland Pulp and Paper Company; and purchased by Advanced Bag and Paper Company of Ohio in January 1921.

195 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, May 18, 1897

196 *Report of Exploration of Twp8R10 N.W.P. 1922*; available at Maine State Archives

197 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 30 and May 21, 1896

198 *The Piscataquis Observer*, May 11, 1899

199 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, January 10, 1899

200 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, October 19, 1899

201 *The Piscataquis Observer*, May 10 and May 24, 1900

202 *Report of Exploration of Twp7R10 N.W.P. 1922*; available at Maine State Archives

203 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 11 and April 25, 1901

204 *The Industrial Journal*, April 1902

205 *The Industrial Journal*, April 1907

206 *Industrial Journal*, April 1902 and *The Piscataquis Observer*, May 8, 1902;

207 *The Maine Sportsman*, June 1902, p. 209

208 *The Industrial Journal*, April 1902

**1904:** The Howland Pulp and Paper Company bought T7R10 N.W.P. that included The Hermitage, a sporting camp. They presumably logged and drove logs from the area beginning no later than 1905.

**1906:** Someone drove on Roaring Brook to the river in 1906.<sup>209</sup>

**1907:** Fleetwood Pride drove logs, perhaps pine, from the KIW village area to his new Brownville mill,<sup>210</sup> and Sawyer and Lancaster drove 3 million board feet of logs from above the Gulf.<sup>211</sup>

**1910 and 1914:** During this time period loggers cut the height of land between Hay and Gulf Hags brooks and drove to the river.<sup>212</sup>

**1912 and 1914:** Two different cuts took place at unknown times during these years. Loggers cut pulpwood along the south border of T7R10 N.W.P. and hauled it to the river between Henderson and Spruce Mountain brooks.<sup>213</sup> Farther upriver some logs came into the river from the northwest corner of T8R10 N.W.P.<sup>214</sup>

**1913–14:** The Pleasant River Pulp Company conducted drives.

**1917–1929:** Logs joining the drive came from Greenwood Brook, White Brook, Spruce Mountain Brook and Big White Brook.

**1917–1922:** During this time loggers cut pulpwood as part of the spruce budworm salvage effort from all but the southern third of the eastern three-eighths of T8R10 N.W.P.<sup>215</sup> In 1917 this effort included loggers cutting the area near the dam at the head of the Gulf.<sup>216</sup> About 1922 loggers cut all the spruce near the river below Little Lyford on account of the infestation. This amounted to what the cruisers labeled as clear cutting.<sup>217</sup>

**1917–1923:** The Jordan Lumber Company of Old Town had cutting operations for saw logs above the Gulf and

drivers drove the logs to the boom at Argyle on the Penobscot River. On those drives one of the drive camps was in a field near Brownville village.<sup>218</sup>

**1923:** Loggers cut on Bear Brook with about 40 men and 16 horses. Their logging camps were still in good condition in 1927.<sup>219</sup> (Bear Brook flows into the river at the head of the Gulf.)

**1925–1927:** The Pleasant River Pulp Company conducted drives.<sup>220</sup> One active logging camp was not far above the head of the Gulf. John E. Kelley, President of Pleasant River Pulp Company and Advance Bag and Paper Company,<sup>221</sup> canceled the lease for The Hermitage at the foot of the Gulf and the two companies used the facility to direct their drives on the river. When the drives on the West Branch ended in 1941, Kelley gave The Hermitage and 10 acres surrounding it to Sarah Green of KIW village and she reopened it as a sporting camp.<sup>222</sup>

**1929:** The Jack Dubane drive came from multiple brooks. A mile-long sluice dumped 5,000 cords of pulpwood on and near White Brook.<sup>223</sup> A jam formed on the brook and George McNerny drowned. Wood also came down Hay Brook and through the Gulf. The drive crew used a headworks to move the logs to the KIW village dam. Above the lake the men used bateaux and canoes to assist in the driving. The drivers camped as the logs moved down river to the Piscataquis River.

**1930:** Beginning sometime in the 1930s, the Hollingsworth and Whitney Pulp and Paper Company moved into the First West Branch Pond area and began cutting pulpwood on White Cap Mountain. The company's mills were on the Kennebec watershed so tractors and trucks hauled the cut to and dumped it in South Inlet on First Roach Pond.<sup>224</sup> This marked the end of the drives from the upper end of the river.

209 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 26, 1906

210 *The Piscataquis Observer*, April 18, 1907

211 *The Industrial Journal*, April 1907

212 *Report of Exploration of Twp7R10 N.W.P. 1922*; available at Maine State Archives

213 *Report of Exploration of Twp7R10 N.W.P. 1922*; available at Maine State Archives

214 *Report of Exploration of Twp8R10 N.W.P. 1922*; available at Maine State Archives

215 *Report of Exploration of Twp7R10 N.W.P. 1922*; available at Maine State Archives

216 *Report of Exploration of Twp7R10 N.W.P. 1922*; available at Maine State Archives

217 *Report of Exploration of Twp7R10 N.W.P. 1922*; available at Maine State Archives

218 William R. Sawtell, *Of Brownville and the Junction* (Milo, ME: Milo Printing Company, 1983)

219 *Report of Exploration of Twp8R10 N.W.P. 1927*; available at Maine State Archives

220 Prentiss Papers, stumpage reports; available at University of Maine Raymond Fogler Library Special Collections

221 Kelley bought the Howland Pulp and Paper mill in 1921 and it became Advance Bag and Paper Company.

222 William R. Sawtell, *Katahdin Iron Works & Gulf Hags: Before and Beyond* (Milo, ME: Milo Printing Company, nd)

223 William Sawtell, *Katahdin Iron Works Revisited* (self-published, 1983)

Other drive bosses included: George McMann, Joe Guys, Paul Martin, Ross Grasse, Lewis Heal, and Billy Boston.

224 Shirley Duplessis, *Hidden in the Woods: The Story of Kokadjo* (Greenville, ME: Moosehead Communications, 1997)



**1932:** Lombards hauled in the Big White Brook valley to the head of Silver Lake.<sup>225</sup>

**1941–1942:** The last drive from above the Gulf was in 1941 with a cleanup in 1942. The 1941 drive for the paper mill at Bucksport started from Mountain Brook Pond where Bangor Hydro Company had a dam. The river drivers moved the logs down river to the boom in Orono, where the crew removed them from the river and trucked them to the mill.<sup>226</sup>

**1942–1945:** Pulpwood drives entered the river from Houston Brook.<sup>227</sup> The 1945 drive may have been the last of the drives. After the war trucking replaced small stream drives.

### ***Tributaries from the south side of the White Cap Mountain area***<sup>228</sup>

These tributaries, which needed considerable infrastructure and stream improvement work in order for loggers to drive them, drained the area north of the West Branch between the foot of the Gulf and Silver Lake. Big White Brook drained the east side of this area. White, Greenwood, Hay, and Gulf Hags brooks drained the bowls of the south face of White Cap Mountain. The 1825 fire did not burn in this area. When each of these streams was last driven is speculative. A great deal of documented cutting took place in the area between 1910 and 1930 so the lumbermen could recoup the investment in the infrastructure. Given the small size of each of these drainages, few if any marketable trees were left standing. The 1934 *Appalachian Trail Guide* to Maine referenced no current cutting in this area. Softwood growth cycles suggest that when loggers returned they used trucks for hauling.

### ***Big White and Spruce Mountain brooks***

Activity in the Big White Brook valley started soon after 1816, when the first settlers cleared land for farms on the river above the north end of Silver Lake. The farmland expansion soon reached 200 acres for vegetables

and hay and for over the next 100 years various owners maintained the acreage to feed those living in KIW village and the loggers. By 1830 the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road from Brownville village turned north at the junction with the Pleasant Valley Tote Road and continued up Big White Brook valley, across the height of land and northwest through the headwaters of the East Branch of the Pleasant River. The area between the road junction and the head of the lake was an often-used depot camp. Perhaps the last to use it was John Kelley of Advance Bag and Paper Company that had pulpwood operations in the area in the 1920s.

Depending on where crews were cutting, logging camps appeared in different places at different times over the years. Pine Camp, 3.5 miles up the valley, was open c.1915–1920. A depot camp, another 2 miles up the valley, was at the foot of the side road that went up to Spruce Mountain Pond to the cutting camp that was active in 1917. At the head of the valley and 2 miles south of B-Pond was Ten Mile Shanty, an overnight stopping point for teamsters hauling on the Chamberlain Lake Tote Road.

Beginning in 1843 loggers for the iron works at the south end of the lake began to cut softwood logs for mill construction and hardwood for the charcoal needed for the blast furnace. Given the 1825 fire past the south end of Silver Lake, the lower end of the Big White Brook valley was a source for this wood, 10,000 cords for each year the furnace operated.

Birch loggers cut in the Big White Brook valley and hauled to the rail siding in KIW village. Supporting that cutting was probably the mill Joseph H. Parker built in 1886 someplace above the head of Silver Lake. Presumably the mill cut birch that he hauled to the KIW siding.<sup>229</sup> This may have been the mill that was a mile up Saddle Rock Brook at the KIW township north town line.

The lower 2.5 miles of Big White Brook invited loggers to drive it and they probably did, perhaps as early as the 1830s.<sup>230</sup> Given loggers did not cut above the Gulf until after 1852, they probably cut on this tributary which had a supporting tote road. The earliest documented logger with a cutting camp on the brook was Jacob Palmer in 1880.<sup>231</sup> His crew of 125 men with

225 William Sawtell, *Katahdin Iron Works Revisited* (self-published, 1983)

226 William R. Sawtell, *Milford Revisited* (Dover-Foxcroft, ME: D&B Printing Services, 1996)

227 *Report of Exploration of Twp6R9 N.W.P. 1945* (KIW township); available at Maine State Archives

228 Each of the log drives mentioned in this section appear in summary in the section titled, "Calendar of recorded log drives and what is known of them: 1853–1947."

229 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, August 10, 1886

230 *Report Exploration of TBR11 N.W.P. 1927*; available at Maine State Archives

231 *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, November 3, 1879

28 horses was on the brook again the following year.<sup>232</sup> Palmer might have been responsible for building the stream's dam that was about 3.5 miles above Silver Lake. By 1900 the predominance of saw-log drives gave way to pulpwood. However, in 1912, 1913, and 1914 the Jordan Lumber Company drove what was perhaps pine logs for their Old Town mill.<sup>233</sup> The stream had a new dam in 1922; it supported the pulpwood drives. By 1927 the dam with its 8-foot head and 5-foot gate needed repairs. A crew probably repaired it in support of the drive in at least 1929, when a mile-long sluice dumped pulpwood into or near the brook.

When loggers first cut on Big White Brook's major tributary Spruce Mountain Stream is unknown. In 1891 Mel Whitten started his drive at an unknown location on Spruce Mountain Stream.<sup>234</sup> The logging camp at the head of the stream, Spruce Mountain Pond, was active in 1917 and had a road to it. In 1927 its lower 4 miles was suitable for pulpwood and the road was impassable.<sup>235</sup> From Spruce Mountain Pond to Big White Brook is 4 miles with another 1.7 miles on Big White Brook to the lake. No record has been found for a dam at the pond or on the stream. However, loggers cut around the pond. Given the expense to put in a tote road, loggers cut a substantial number of logs. The road down the mountain was too steep for a lot of hauling. Consequently, the cut probably went down the stream from the pond with the help of at least one splash dam, which was probably at the pond.

Lombard log haulers, which were available after 1901, began hauling in the Big White Brook valley in an unknown year. They hauled softwood out onto Silver Lake's ice and as they made their wide arc to turn around men unloaded the moving sleds. The sleds of birch went down the lake to the Perkins and Danforth mill (1897–1921) in the old iron works buildings near the dam. In 1932 at least one Lombard was still hauling pulpwood to the lake. At the mouth of White Brook Harry Green, who grew up in KIW village as his mother Sarah did, found an old burned Lombard log hauler that had been partial-

ly buried in the sand of Big White Brook. During WWII he dug it up for scrap metal in support of the war.<sup>236</sup>

### **White and Greenwood brooks, Hay Brook, and Gulf Hagas Brook**

Loggers may not have begun to drive on these waterways until after 1900. The earliest cutting records discovered are between 1910 and 1920. Loggers cut the height of land between Hay and Gulf Hagas brooks and drove to the river between 1910 and 1914.<sup>237</sup> Drives came down Greenwood Brook and White Brook from 1917 through 1919.

The drainages' township assessments of 1922 and 1927 provided some insight into the logging operations on these streams. The 1922 document reported that loggers could drive Hay Brook's lower 2 miles and that Hay Brook had a dam at the mouth of its headwaters bowl. Greenwood Pond had a dam at its outlet and loggers could drive the full length of the stream.

The 1927 report included more information on dams, streams, and roads. The Hay Brook dam was at about the brooks' midpoint and had a 10-foot head and a 4-foot gate; the one on White Brook had a 14-foot head and two 5-foot gates; and the dam at Greenwood Pond had a 9-foot head and a 5-foot gate. These dams were all in good repair and the other dams not listed were in fair condition.<sup>238</sup>

The gates, size, and condition of these dams, and nearby logging camps, suggested their use for substantial operations over a number of years beginning about 1910 and continuing into the 1920s. Hay, White, and Greenwood brooks were all in good drivable condition. The road from KIW village to Kelley's camp near the head of Silver Lake was well-graveled, but in poor shape beyond that. Roads went from Kelley's depot camp along Greenwood Brook to the pond, another along the upper part of Hay Brook and another along Gulf Hagas Brook.<sup>239</sup> Teamsters toted supplies from KIW village on these roads.<sup>240</sup>

232 *Daily Kennebec Journal*, October 27, 1881

233 The Prentiss Papers, Henry Prentiss log and stumpage book; available at Maine State Archives

234 Theodore Lincoln Smith, *Some notes on a two-week trip to Katahdin Iron Works and B-Pond, 18 September 1920 to 4 October 1920*; available at the University of Maine Folklore Center

235 *Report Exploration of TBR11 N.W.P. 1927*; available at Maine State Archives

236 conversation with John Leathers

237 *Report of Exploration of Twp7R10 N.W.P. 1922*; available at Maine State Archives

238 *Report of Exploration of TwpBR11 W.E.L.S. 1927*; available at Maine State Archives

239 *Report of Exploration of Twp7R10 N.W.P. 1927*; available at Maine State Archives

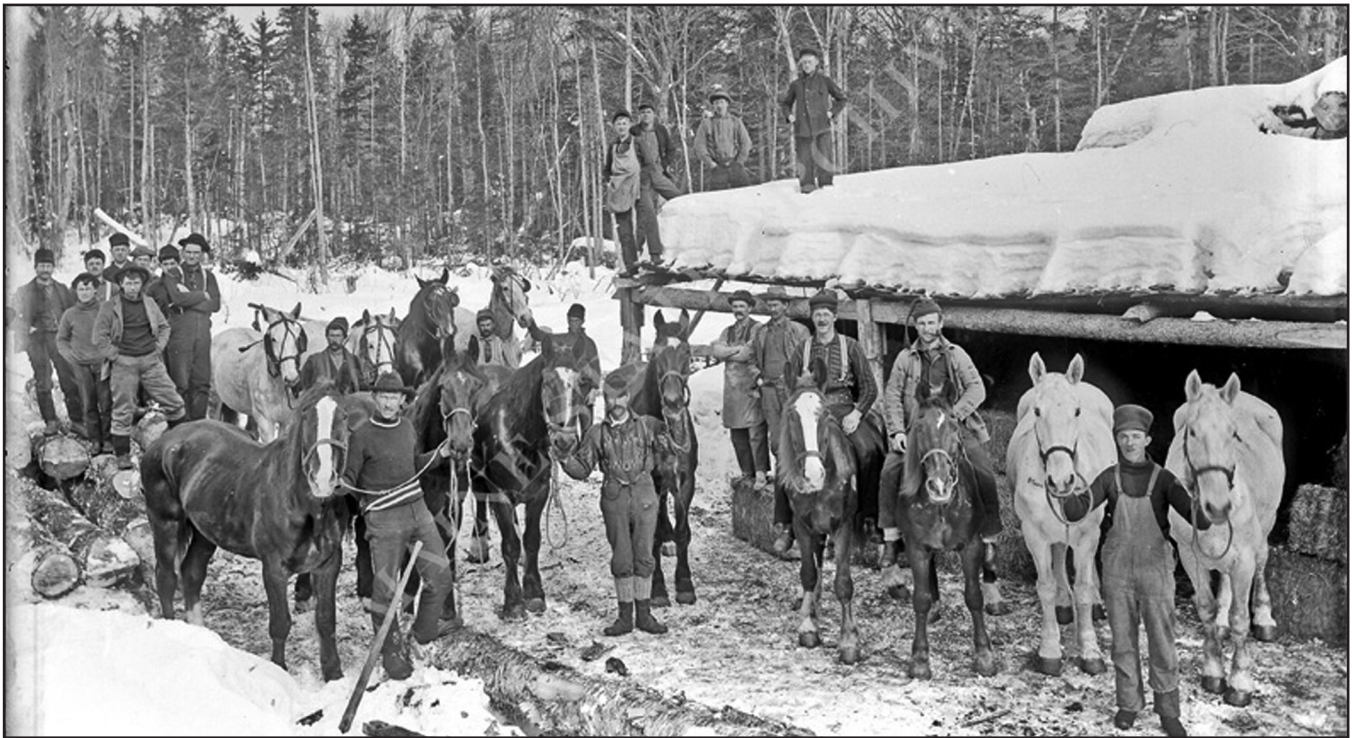
240 At some point the tote road up along White Brook had a set of narrow-gauge rails as discovered by John Leathers. Their purpose is still a mystery.





Consider the number of barrels teamsters had to tote to a logging camp when a 100-man crew typically consumed the baked goods from a barrel of flour and a half barrel of salt pork per day, as they probably did at this logging camp in the First West Branch Pond area above Gulf Hags.

(courtesy of Eric Stirling and family, First West Branch Pond Sporting Camps whose original building was a late 1870s logging camp)



A Sunday picture, a typical logging camp crew's one day off, otherwise it is off before sunup and back after sundown; this is in the Monson area around the end of the 20th century.

(from a glass plate negative, gifted to the Maine State Archives by John Beaupain)